

THE
Spiritual Director
OF
Devout and Religious
SOULS.

*Written by the B. St. FRANCIS
SALES, Bishop and Prince
of Geneva.*

Printed in the Year 1704.



To the Right Honourable
T H E
Lady *MARY HOWARD*,
Of *NORFOLK* and *Worksop* ;
Mother to His Grace *THOMAS* Duke of *NORFOLK*.

Madam,

IF the present I here send
your Ladyship, were of
of such a nature as makes
it chiefly valuable for its
Bulk, I should be ashame'd
to offer so puny a *Token*,
to a Personage of Your
Eminent Rank. But *Spi-*
ritual things are so highly
rais'd

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rais'd above the base Alloy
of Body and *Quantity*, that
their *Value* is not at all
to be rated from those mean
Considerations. 'Tis their
Intrinsick Worth, which gives
them their Dignity ; and
the Standard, by which their
just Price is to be *measur'd*,
is fixt by an inerrable De-
cree of Heaven it self ; which
order'd they should be only
held so far *Current* and
Estimable, as they raise us to
such high steps in Virtue
as may invest us in the
Possession and Enjoyment
of the Beatifying Sight of our
infinitely amiable Creator.
Yet, the greatest Virtues have

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their Degrees, by which they excell one another, and none of them but may also be practis'd in a *Greater*, or *Lesser* Perfection: And therefore that Virtue must absolutely be accounted the *Best*, which is the *Immediate Disposition* to *Glory*; such is that most Sublime Virtue, *Charity*, or the *Hearty and Ardent Love* of our Dear *GOD* for his own Sake, and of our *Neighbour* in Subordination to the Love of *Him*. This Virtue therefore is justly reputed the *Queen* of all the rest, from which they borrow all their *Lustre*, their *Merit*, nay their very *Being*. This.

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only is that *Jewell*, which truly *enriches* a Soul, and makes it *Precious* in the Eye of Heaven. Wherefore such Books as directly tend to advance our Souls in *Charity*, and *such* a Charity as is rais'd to the highest Pitch, are, beyond all Comparison, the most inestimable Present that the Treasury of Christian Doctrine can afford us, and most worthy the Acceptance of such Devout Souls as is that of Your Ladyship.

'Tis this Consideration, Madam, which secures me from the Censure of Imprudence

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dencee in offering You some
small inconsiderable Trifle
by this Address; For, how
can that be deemd *small*,
which brings along with
it *Charity*, drest up in the
most Glittering and Richest
Robes of the Purest and
Highest Perfection; that is,
brings with it a Virtue,
which so *enlarges* our Soul,
that it makes it capable to
Embrace the *whole World*,
and even the *Deity* it self.
Such is the strain of *Chari-
ty*, which this little Tre-
atise comprises, and endea-
vours to imprint in our
Wills; insomuch, that I dare
confidently affirm, that who-
ever

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ever pretends to out do, or exceed it, must borrow his Instructions and Examples from the Blessed Saints and Angels in Heaven, not finding any amongst the Sons of *Adam*, in our lower Climate of Mortality, that transcends it. Your Ladyship may, while you peruse it, observe that all the Pious Rules and Documents it gives, do begin, and spring from the Love of GOD, and thence (as the Order of Charity requires) do descend to our Neighbour out of this sole motive that they may Glorify *Him*, in living up to the Perfection of his Hol-
ly

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ly Law, and so be Happy in *Him*. You will here see how **Charity** has an Ascendent over *all other* Virtues whatever ; how it Influences, Tinctures and Guilds them all ; that, thus *Burnisbt* and *Stamp*t, they may be held *Current Coin*, when our *Accounts* shall come to be made up with **Heaven**. You will, moreover, see how this all-Commanding Soveraign, draws and leads **Captive** after it all the Motions of our *Inferiour* Part, and all the *Exteriour* Actions of the Bodily Faculties ; making them all run levell in a *Streight Line* towards **Eternal**

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Eternal Happiness, in Despite of all the *Crooked Byasses* which Original Corruption gives us, and all the Intricate Mazes and Entangling Obstacles, which our Ghostly Enemy throws in our way to Heaven. You will see how it forestalls and prevents Temptations by giving clear and easy Lights to discover and avoid the fly Ambushes and hidden Snares, laid by the Tempter to entrap our unwary steps. Lastly, you will discern how this excellent Saint does all this with a compendious Brevity ; and this, without injecting Frights and

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and Scruples into the Minds of his well-meaning Devotes ; but that he conducts them toward Heaven, by the most *Sweet*, most *Secure*, and most *Comfortable* way of those Divine Virtues, *Hope* and *Love*. Nothing was more opposite to his Genius than *Austere* and *Terrifying* Doctrine : Nor will Your Ladyship meet with any thing in this Little-Great Treatise, but the heaven distill'd Doctrine of *Divine Love*, exalted and sublim'd into a Quintessence.

It would be an Injury to Your Ladyship's well known

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known Goodness, to object that Books of such a high strain, are improper for Your Circumstances. You have as many Acknowledgers as you have Knowers, that Your Exemplary Virtues have already set you (to speak with the least) some what above the ordinary Pitch of those Christians, who are reputed very *Pious*. The Height of Nobility, which dazles the Eyes of too many with *Pride*, to see how little and despicable those poor underlings, upon whom they look down from the towering Pinnacle of Honour, do seem in

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in comparison of themselves,
could never *Debase* Your
truly Generous Soul to such
an Unworthy Meanness. Nor
could those Idle and Danger-
ous Vanities, which do ge-
nerally attend Greatness, and
are too often its darling
Entertainments, ever allure
your Soul, settled and fixt
by Solid Christian Princi-
ples, to affect those fashion-
able Trifles, Since then all Spi-
ritual Directers do agree that
not to go forward in Spirituali-
ty and the Practice of Devo-
tion, is to *run backward*, no-
thing can be a more pro-
per Employ for those of
your Ladyship's Pitch than
to

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to aim at some *farther* Degrees of *Perfection*. I have been inform'd Your Ladyship has read that incomparable Piece, entituled, **PHILOTHEA**, or, *A Pilgrimage to the Chappel of the Holy Cross*, (Elegantly translated out of *Spanish*, by my Honoured and Ingenious Friend Mr. F. H.) and that your good Judgment has well esteem'd it: Which makes me still the more presume that this little Manual will not be unpalatable to your Ladyship, since it runs on the same Pious Strain. Indeed some particularities do here and there occur,

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occur, which are not so suitable to Your State; but the *Principle. viz.* the Con-forming our selves, in every thing we either *Act*, or *Suffer*, to GOD's Will, is to both of them the *Groundwork*, on which they *Descant*.

That the Perusal of this Affective Treatise may, by a Prudent Application of that Principle to Your own Circumstances, conduce to the advancing Your Devout Soul to some Degrees of Perfection, (as far as may be proper and agreeable to Your Condition) and, by that means, to the approaching it nearer Heaven, shall be,
for

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for the small remainder of
his decaying Life, the Daily
Prayer of,

Madam.

Your Ladyship's Sincere
Honourer, and most
bumbly Devoted Ser-
vant,

F. S.

TO THE READER.

NOne who ever read the Devout Books writ by that Blessed St. Bishop Sales, will think that the least strictures which dropt from his pelliflous Pen, should be con'd to France, and lost to those Pious Souls in England, who are not skill'd in that Language. This consideration won me to turn Translator (an Employ, from which I always had an Aversion) and to render this Piece into
b English,

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English. I had moreover a ^{since} fire, to do some Service to the ^{even} Holy Man in the best manner ^{give} I was able, by increasing to ^{press} those Accidental Joys ^{by} Heaven, which every Happy ^{Thou} Soul receives, whenever the ^{hom} good Works, done here, do ^{most} come more Diffusive, and Extensive ^{was} to more Subjects; either ^{bett} by instructing them in ^{other} Knowledge of Heaven ^{such} things, or by Affecting them ^{ma} to pursue them; in producing ^{to e} which good Dispositions in the ^{Pe} Minds of his Readers and ^{Gr} Hearers, this Seraphick Saint ^{wa} was very signally Excellent ^{an} It needs little Reflexion to ^{ga} that his Heart was a burning ^{to} Furnace of Divine Love ^{fin}

To the Reader.

Since every Pious Reader may
even feel, by the warmth it
gives them, that each ex-
pression darted thence, is a live-
ly Spark to enflame others.
Tho' his Thoughts, while at
home in his own Breast, were
most Sublime, yet his Charity
was so condescending, that, the
better to communicate them to
others, he delivered them in
such a Facil and Familiar
manner, that he stoopt them
to every ordinary Capacity.

But that which was most
Peculiar to the Genius of this
Great Master of Spirituality,
was an Air of an unaffected
and genuine Sweetness, which
gave a most delicious Relish
to all his persuasive Discourses,

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made them attractive to all that
and, like Oyl, the Emblem of
Charity, did penetrate, and
with a gentle softness insinuate
it self into Hearts of the most
Obdurate Temper. 'Tis this which
made his kindest invita-
tions to embrace Truth, and
follow Vertue, so irresistible, that
they had the full force of
importunate Compulsion, tho' they
had nothing of its Rough-
ness; nor did they leave any
Power in the most ill-natur'd
Will, to oppose such Calm
and Clear Reason, accompa-
ny'd with such an Obliging
Charity, and Charming Ci-
vility. In a word, tho' the
whole Composition of his Writ-
ings were wholly made up of
that

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all that Heavenly Fire, that
ofain'd down at Pentecost,
andet, by a strange Art almost
particular to himself, he so
Refracted that warm Zeal,
which other great Saints have
made use of to press Men to
Exact Vertue, that his Cha-
rity, tho' Ardent in it self,
seem'd only to have the nature
of a Lambent Flame; En-
lightning and Purifying, with-
out Offending or Scorch-
ing.

This Charitable and Indif-
ferent Complaisance (if I
may so call it) was so remark-
able in this Holy Man, that
the **CHURCH** judg'd it pro-
per to make mention of it, in
the particular Prayer appoint-

To the Reader.

ed in his Office, and to declar Co
that he was (to use the words of
of the Apostle of the Gentiles) Ser
Omnibus omnia factus, ofer
became All to All, to gain H
them to Heaven; fitting, bwe
a Prudence more than Natural
and accommodating his Dispu
courses so aptly to the Exigencies
and Dispositions of every singl di
Person, that he sweetly Capti ga
vated both their Understandings
and Wills, and subiecte
them to the Law of Christ. O

This did also give occasion W
to the saying of that Learned as
Controvertist, the famous Car
dinal Perron; If (said he, ri
you would have a Calvinist in
convinc'd, bring him to me; th
but, if you would have him to
Converted,

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lar Converted, (of whom it is
ord said in his Life, he converted
les) Seventy two Thousand)
, offend him to Bishop Sales.
ain His great Knowledge, tho' it
b were Extraordinary and above
rathe common, could only give
Diss such Previous Lights, as were
ncable fully to satisfy an unpreju-
gl dic'd Understanding ; but, to
pti gain upon and subdue such a no-
nd ble Faculty as that of the Will,
ted which is only subject to Gods
Omnipotence, is the proper
sion Work of such Heroick Saints
ned as breath nothing but a most
ar enflamed and refin'd Cha-
rity ; such select Persons be-
nising the fitteſt Instruments for
ne; the Divine Spirit of Love
im to make uſe of as Means,
ed, when

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*when he infuses his best Gift, su
Sanctifying Grace. All that
anteceded, let Human Learn-
ing do its utmost, were no
more but Dry Proposals;
nor could they arrive at the
pitch of Effectual Motives,
till that unseen Hand, by the
Inspiration of his Holy Angels,
and of such Angelical Men,
did touch the Heart.*

I hope none will (I am
sure none can, without pro-
fessing at the same time he
dislikes Perfection) look upon
this Piece as less recommen-
dable, or less useful, because
the Author of it, did chiefly Dis-
(at least particularly) intend
it for Religious Votresses in
of his own Order. I would ask us
such

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such men for what end do the Generality of Christians read the Lives of so many Holy Hermits, Martyrs, Bishops, and Religious? Certainly not to imitate them in what belongs to their Particular Vocation, but in what concerns all Christians in General; that is, in the Purity of their Intention, the ayming all their Actions at Heaven, and the doing them in Conformity to God's Holy Will; from which Duties no State, how High or Low soever it be, ought to be exempt, since in this good Disposition consists all our Merit. Besides, tho' the Stations in which Providence has plac'd us be different, and several Instructions

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Instructions are found here, which do more especially regard a Recollected Life; yet 'tis not hard to Transferr those advantageous Rules of exact Virtue to our own Circumstances, and thence enure ourselves to parallel Degrees of Perfection. At least, if we fall short, it will keep us Humble; while reflecting, on one side, upon the Purity of those Angelical Souls, and, on the other, on our own Slight Performances, we shall remain Confounded and ashamed at our Sloth and Tepidity. For what can give well-meaning Christians a greater Regret than to consider that, tho' we are fram'd of the same mold, have

the

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the same Heaven propos'd to us for our Reward, and so many Holy Examples set before us for our Imitation, we are still so backward to follow them in the Paths of Perfection; the Roughness of which (if any thing can be Rough that is sweeten'd with Love) so many Pure Souls, by constantly treading in them, have (as the Holy Baptist expresses it) made Plain, and beaten into a Direct Smooth and Even Road?

Thine Affectionately
in Christ.

J. S.

2. A.

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CHAP. I.

Of Liberty of Spirit.

Liberty of Spirit is the keeping the Heart totally disengaged from every Created thing, that it may follow the known Will of **G O D**.

The Soul which has attain'd to this *Liberty*, takes no care for any thing, but that the Name of **GOD**

be sanctify'd, that his Majesty reign in us, and that his Will be done.

The first Mark of this Holy *Liberty of Spirit* is, not to be attach'd to, or set upon any Consolation whatever; but having done our Duty, to remain Indifferent to every thing else.

The second Mark is, that the Heart which has attain'd this Liberty, do not in such a manner engage its Affection to any Spiritual Exercises, as that, if thro' Sickness, or by Obedience, it be hindered from performing them, it gives way to any Trouble or Regret; and that, tho' it ought still exceedingly to love them, yet, it be not, for all that, attacht to them.

The third Mark is, that we do not upon any account lose our Joy and Content of Mind; for the loss of nothing can make him sad, who is not fondly addicted to any thing.

The Effects of this *Liberty* are a great Sweetness of Spirit, a gentele Complaisance and Condescendence to what ever is not *Sin*, and an humour

mour easily moved to all Actions of Virtue and Charity. For Example, a Soul that is attacht, or earnestly addicted to the Exercise of Meditation, if she be interrupted in it, will fall into Vexation, Disturbance, and Anxiety ; whereas a Soul endowed with this *Liberty of Spirit*, retains still the same equal Countenance and a heart full of kindness, even to that which Incommode^d and hindred her from meditating. For, 'tis all one to her, whether she serves GOD in using Mental Prayer, or whether she serves him, in assisting her Neighbour ; both the one and the other being agreeable to the Will of GOD ; but the Relieving her Neighbour is *more* agreeable; because it was more Necessary at that Season.

In the Exercises of this Liberty are comprehended all the Occasions, and all things whatever, which happen contrary to our Inclination ; for he who has his Inclinations Free, and not particularly bent upon them, does not fall into any Im-

patience by being detain'd from them.

This *Liberty*, (like all the other *Virtues*) has two contrary *Vices*, *Instability* and *Constraint*, that is, a loose Carelessness, and a slavish Predisposition.

Instability or *Looseness* is a certain *Excess* of *Liberty*, which makes us upon the least occasion that presents it self, forego and break our Rules and Laudable customs of Living; whence the Heart becomes dissipated and disorderly scatter'd, and thence comes to lose it self.

Constraint or *Slavishness*, is a certain *Defect* of *Liberty*, by which the Spirit is overwhelm'd and beaten down with *Vexation*, or *Anger*, that it cannot go on with its *Design*; tho' at the same time it might do what's much better.

To arm our selves against the shock of this Temptation, two Rules ought to be observ'd: viz. that one must never leave off their Exercises, and the Common ways of *Virtue*, unless he sees that the Will of GOD obliges

obliges him to the contrary. Now such a Will of GOD, manifests it self to us three manner of ways ; by Necessity of the thing, by Obedience, and by Charity.

The second Rule is, that when Charity moves us to use this Liberty of Spirit, we are to take care that it be done without Scandal, or Injustice. For example, in case I know that I shall do more good in performing some other Duty, than in doing that to which I apply my self at present, I am not, for all that, at Liberty to change the former, for fear I should give Scandal, and withall wrong Justice ; because I am, in my circumstance, oblig'd not to quit that station in which Obedience has plac'd me.

Two or three Examples will make this clearer. St. *Charles Borromeus* was the most exact, rigorous, and austere in his manner of Living, as can well be imagin'd : He drank nothing but Water, and Eat nothing but Bread, and in four and Twenty years, he went but twice into his Garden. And yet

this Rigorous Man did often Dine with the *Swissers* to gain them to Goodness; nor made he any difficulty to Drink heartily with them every Meal, above what was necessary to quench his Thirst. So much did his *Liberty of Spirit* borrow leave of his Rigour, when a greater good was to be done.

The Bishop *Spiridion* eat Flesh in Lent with a Pilgrim half dead with Hunger, to take away his Scruple; there being nothing else for him to Eat: So full of Charity was the pious Liberty of this Holy Man.

Father *Ignatius Loyola* eat Flesh on *Wednesday* in *Holy-week*, upon the meer order of a *Physitian*, who judged it expedient for a small indisposition that had seized him; and yet a *Spirit of Constraint*, made him pray three days continually.

These, like lesser *Stars*, give us some small *Light*, but now I will present you a *Sun*; I mean a *Spirit* perfectly Free from all manner of Engagement, and solely bent to perform *GOD's* will at any rate.

I have

have oft been thinking, what was the greatest Mortification of any Saint whose Life I ever read ; and this seems to me the most unparalleled. St. *John Baptist* was in the Wilderness five and Twenty years; Good God ! How was his Heart inflamed with the Love of his Saviour even from his Mothers Womb ! How ardently did he desire to enjoy his holy presence ! Yet nevertheless, being wholly addicted to perform GOD's Will, he continued there to do the Duty which GOD had enjoyn'd him, without coming so much as once to visit him, and stay'd till Christ thought fit to come to him. After this, and after he was Baptized, he never follows him, but remains behind to do his Office. What a Prodigious mortification of Spirit was this ! To be so near his GOD and Saviour, and not so much as to allow himself the Happiness of going to see him ! To have him so near him, and not to enjoy him ! And what signifies this ; but that his heart was so disinterested,

and so disengaged from every thing and even from GOD himself here, that he would forego all the Spiritual comfort he might take, and all the Spiritual Profit he might reap by Christ's Company and Presence, meerly that he might do his Will, and attend his Service. This Example of *Liberty of Spirit* is so Transcendent, that I cannot think of it without Amazement and Astonishment.

CHAP. II.

What it is to Live according to the Spirit.

TO live according to the Spirit, my well beloved Daughter, is to have our Thoughts, Words and Actions, directed according to those Virtues which are in our *Spiritual Part*, and not according to our *Sense*, or those Sentiments which are agreeable to our *Flesh*. And what Virtues are these? *Faith*, which acquaints us with such **Truths**

Truths which are wholly Elevated above our Sense : *Hope*, which raises our Hearts to the Expectation of Invisible Goods ; and *Charity*, which makes us Love GOD above all things, and our Neighbour as our selves ; And this not with a Sensual, Natural and Interested Love, but with such a Love, as is pure and solid, as having its Root and Foundation in GOD. You see here that Human Sense which is built and grounded on the Flesh, is the cause, why we do not sufficiently abandon and give up our selves into GOD's hands, but come to distrust him.

The Soul which relies on *Faith*, and is only grounded on it, does Encourage it self amidst the greatest Difficulties ; because it is well assur'd that *God* Loves, Supports, and Succours those who are in Misery, so they do but put their Trust in him. Human *Sense* will needs have some share in every thing ; and loves it self so fondly, that it esteems nothing Good, or well done, if it self have not a hand.

hand in it. On the contrary, the *Spirit* fixes it self only on *God*, and oft times says within it self; and makes account that whatever is not *God*, is nothing to her, or worth regarding; and as she does concern her self through *Charity* in such affairs as are communicated to her, or put upon her; so through *Self-Denyal* and *Humility*, she voluntarily quits her part, as to such things as are not propos'd to her, nor affects to have any thing to do with them.

To live *according to the Spirit*, is to love what the *Spirit* loves: To live *according to the Flesh*, is to love what the *Flesh* loves; for *Love* is the *Life* of the *Soul*, as the *Soul* is the *Life* of the *Body*. A Person is very *Sweet-Natur'd* and very *Agreeable*; and I tender him dearly: He loves me too very heartily, and obliges me highly, and for this regard I render him a *Reciprocal Love*: Now, who sees not, that in doing thus, I love him according to the *Sense* and the *Flesh*? Another is rude, harsh and uncivill; and

and nevertheless, not for any Pleasure or Content I take in him, nor for any kind of Self Interest, but purely because such is the good Pleasure of GOD, I Cherish, Serve, and Caress him. This Love is according to the *Spirit*; the Flesh having no share at all in this kind of Love.

I am distrustful of my self, and thence I am very desirous to foment this despondency, and to live according to my Propension. Now who sees not that this giving way to my natural Inclination is not to live according to the *Spirit*? No certainly. But, if, tho' my Nature be Fearfull and Apprehensive, I do notwithstanding strive to overcome my natural Passions, and by little and little frame my self to perform laudably those things that belong to my charge with Obedience, which the Divine Disposition has impos'd upon me, who sees not that, in this case, while I do this, I live according to the *Spirit*?

To live according to the *Spirit*, is to do those Actions, speak those Words, and think those Thoughts which

which the Spirit of GOD requires from us. When I say, *think those Thoughts*, I mean by those words, *Voluntary Thoughts*. For example, I am in a sad or musty humour, and for this reason I refuse to speak at all: And Carmen, nay the very Parrots do the same. But if I be sad, but yet, because Charity commands, I bring my self to speak as I do at other times; this is to behave my self like a *Spiritual Man*. Again, I am contemned or disregarded and fall into Anger; Peacocks and Apes do the same. But, if when I am slighted, I rejoice at it, I shall demean my self like those Masters of *Spirituality*, the Apostles. Wherefore to live according to the *Spirit*, is to do that which *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity* teach us to do, whether it be in *Temporal things*, or in *Spiritual*.

C H A P. III.

Of Devotion, and the Love of God,

TO have true Devotion, we must keep Gods Commandments, and the Precepts of the Church, which are ordained for all Christians: But, besides these General Laws of living, we must moreover carefully observe and practice those particular ones too, which belong to every ones Vocation: And he who neglects these, tho' instead of doing them, he should raise the Dead, he would be in the State of Sin, and Damn'd if he dies so.

For example, Bishops are commanded to visit their Flocks, to instruct, reform, and comfort them. Wherefore, tho' I remain'd a whole Year together in Prayer, tho' I fasted all my whole Life, and yet neglected to do these Duties, I should questionless utterly ruine my Soul.

Tho'

Tho' one who had entered into a Religious Order should do Miracles, and yet renders not due Obedience to Superiors, he is for all his Miracles, worse than an Infidel; and the same may be said of other such like cases.

We see here then two sorts of Commandments, which we must carefully observe if we would have our Devotion solid and well grounded; and our Devotion consists in observing them readily and voluntarily: To gain which promptitude and readiness, we must make use of two Considerations.

The first is, that 'tis GOD's Will; and tho' there were no other Motive, the highest and clearest reason tells us that we ought to comply with his Will; this being the sole reason why we are placed in this World; and with what face can we pretend we are *His*, if we refuse to frame our Will to *his*?

The second Consideration is, that we lay to heart that the Nature of his Commandments are sweet and pleasant

pleasant, nor do I speak the General Ones only, but also of those particular Ones which belong to every Mans Vocation. What is it then that makes them seem Irksome and Grievious ? Nothing, certainly but our own *Proper Will* which will needs reign in us, let it cost what it will : It pretends indeed in words, that it desires to serve GOD ; but yet on our *own* Fashion, or as it pleases *our selves*, and not as it pleases *him* : Which is in effect, to desire that *Our Will* may be done, and not *His*.

GOD will accept no Sacrifice which contradicts Obedience. How preposterous is it, that when GOD commands me to look to the care of Souls, I should spend my time in Contemplation. The Contemplative Life is indeed Good and Holy ; but not when it comes in Competition with Obedience, and prejudices it. It does not belong to us to chuse our own Will : We ought to have none but what is *his*, and if it be GOD's Will that I apply my self to one thing, I ought to have no Will.

Will to apply my self to another : It was God's Will that *Saul* should serve him in the Quality of a King, and a Captain, and he would needs take upon him to serve him in the Quality of a Priest, and offer him Sacrifice : No doubt but this last was in it self more excellent than the former ; yet GOD was not all pleased with this consideration : His will was that he should be absolutely obey'd. 'Tis the wretched frailty of our Nature to prefer the doing our *own* Will before GOD's ; whence is seen, that the less we are addicted to gratifying our own Will, we shall in proportion, so much more easily perform the Will of GOD.

We ought to consider that there is no state of Life which has not its Troubles, Disgusts, and Vexations ; insomuch, that excepting those who are wholly resigned to GOD's Will, there is scarce any Man who would not willingly change his Condition for that of some others.

They

They who have a Feaver find no place easy to them ; they can scarce continue a quarter of an hour in one Bed, but they long to be in another : 'Tis not the Bed which makes them thus uneasy and restless, but 'tis the Feaver that torments them wherever they are. He that is not Sick of this Feaver of self-will, finds his content in any condition, so he performs the Will of GOD : He is not Solicitous in what Quality GOD employs him ; provided the Divine Will be done, he is indifferent in what way it is done. Yet this is not all, there is yet another thing requisite to make us truly Devout, which is, that we must do GOD's Will in the Station in which he has placed us, with *Alacrity*, and *Chearfully*. If I were not in such a Condition already, perhaps knowing what I do now, I would not have imbraced it ; but the Divine Providence having put me in it, I become oblig'd to go through with it, let it be as tedious as it will ; nor only so, but I am moreover oblig'd to comply with it *joyfully*, and by my

my Resignation to *make it pleasant* to me, tho' I did not *find* it such. And this is the meaning of that saying of St. Paul. *Let every one remain in his Vocation before God.* He must renounce his own choice and wish ; and, if it be painfull to him, bear his Cross. 'Tis a Temptation to stand thinking, I could be well contented with this or that, or I would, be more willing to be in that State than in this. Our Lord knows what he does ; all we have to do is to do what he would have us, and continue in the posture in which he has put us. To enable you the better to perform this, you may make use of these Considerations. First, in the Morning reflect on the perfect Obedience which Christ, our Lord and Pattern did exercise to the Commands of his Heavenly Father ; and, by his Example, strive and enforce your self to gain a Vigorous Love of accomplishing GOD's Will. And, secondly, when you find your self in such Circumstances as give you pain and Vexation, consider how the

Saints

Saints have gone thorow, and this
Cheerfully and Joyfully, many
things which were far more trou-
blesome and vexatious than those
you endure. Lay this to Heart and
encourage your self by their Ex-
ample.

Thirdly, You must often consi-
der that all we do has its true va-
lue from the Conformity we have
with the Will of GOD ; insomuch,
that, if when I Eat or Drink, I
do it because 'tis GOD's Will I
should do it, I shall please GOD
better than if I suffer'd Death with-
out having that Intention.

Fourthly, You are often to ask
our Saviour Mentally, *Lord what
is your Will I should do?* It is your
pleasure that I should serve you in
the vilest Office in the House ?
Alas ! I am too happy you are plea-
sed to accept and employ me at all
for your Seryant, let it be in what
it will ; let me but serve you, and I
shall not be solicitous how mean a
Drudgery you appoint me ; it will
be dignify'd enough by its being a
Service to the King of Heaven.

Then

Then descending to that particular work which is so disgusting to your Nature, ask again: Is it your Will I should do such or such a thing? I will do it, Lord, most willingly. Good GOD! What store of Humanity will you gain, what inestimable treasure of Grace and Virtue will you acquire by this Holy Exercise.

Moreover, we must endeavour to render our Devotion amiable, profitable, and agreeable to every one we converse with. The Sick will love your Devotion for the Charitable assistance and comfort they find by it. Your *Family* will love it, because it renders your Humour more sweet in all occurrences, and more kind and affable in your Reprehensions; and so of the rest; all sorts will be pleased and gratify'd by it. Your *Superiors*, by seeing it makes you more pliable, ready, and cordial in obeying and performing their Commands. Your *Equals*, by finding that it makes you more debonaire, more assistant to help their necessities,

sities, and more condescending to all their desires that clash not with the Will of GOD: In a word, you are to labour as much as is possible to render your Devotion more acceptable, agreeable, and charming to all sorts whatsoever.

And for this reason, my dear Daughter, be careful not to omit your coming to the Holy Communion, let the occasion that would divert you be never so great. Nothing will better recollect your Spirit, which is apt to be squandered, than the August Presence of your King; nothing will warm it so well as the approaching to your Sun; nothing will soften it so gently as that Celestial Balm.

Continue to comply with this Supream Bounty of his with sincerity and sweetnes of Spirit, since he invites you to partake it with so much sweetnes and love.

Keep your Affections in an orderly subjection to the Will of your great GOD and dear Saviour; take heed you do not cherish so much as one of them, under what pretense soever,

soever, which is not made Authentick and Legitimate by the Seal of your Heavenly King. Nay, if it be possible, do not love GOD's Will because it is agreeable to *yours* ; but love your *own* Will purely because it is agreeable to GOD's:

Be careful to render your Heart every day more *Pure*. Now this *Purity* consists in prizing every thing according to its just value, and weighing it by the weights of the Sanctuary, that is by the agreeableness it has to the Divine Will.

Let me intreat you not to set your affection too much upon *any* thing, no not upon the *Virtues* themselves, which we oft times lose by our zealous over-doing them. Oh, what a happiness would it be to keep all our Affections exactly, and humbly subject to the Will of God ! 'Tis the Glory of this holy Love to destroy, and annihilate in our Soul whatever is not GOD himself, that so we may reduce and convert every thing into *him*, who is the Original of all things. He is exalted,

exalted best in our Annihilation, and reigns most perfectly when he is seated upon the Throne of our intire subjection. All that is done for *this Love is Love* : Let it be Vexations, Troubles, or even Death, 'tis all of it nothing else but *Love*, when the Love of GOD is the motive for whose sake we endure it. Endeavour to frame your self to become a little Lamb, or Dove ; that is, all full of simplicity, sweetness, and meekness, without reply when you are cross'd, or without requiting Evil for Evil. Love this early and ever-loving GOD, my dear Sister. Love him in your Retirements when you sequester your self from Company to Pray to him and Adore him ; Love him affectionately when you receive him in the Holy Communion, and when he vouchsafes you Consolation in your Devotions : But above all, when trouble and inward afflictions happen. Love him in your Dryness, in your Tribulations and Contradictions ; for *thus he loved you of old in Paradise* ; and

has still better confirm'd and attested to you this Love amidst his Scourges, Nails, Thorns, and the dismal Darkness on Mount *Calvary*. Take notice of this, and lay it up in your mind as a most Authentick Truth, that they who pretend to have any part in *Jesus Glorify'd*, must first (at least in their desire) have some part and suffer with *Jesus Crucify'd*.

'Tis a great Good to be GOD's; and the greatest Good our Soul can arrive at, is to be *purely GOD's* or *only His*. He who is *wholly GOD's* is never sorrowfull for any thing but that he has offended GOD, and his sorrow for his offence is accompanied with a Sweet and Profound, but yet a Quiet and Peaceable Humility and Submission; after which he raises himself again by a sweet and perfect Confidence in the Divine Goodness, without any Chagrin or Vexation. He who is intirely GOD's seeks after nothing but *Him*; and in regard he knows that he is equally *His* in Tribulation as in Prosperity, therefore

fore he remains in Perfect Peace tho' surrounded with Adversities. He who is *only* GOD's thinks often of him amidst all the Rencounters and Occasions of this Life. Lastly, he who is *only* GOD's, is well content that all the World should know that he is resolv'd to serve him, and to use all the Exercises and Means which are proper to keep himself united with him. Be then GOD's, my good Daughter, and *only* His; desire nothing but to please him; Be no Creatures, nor love it, but in him, and for him, as far as his Divine Will gives you leave.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Qualities requisite to true Devotion.

BE not shy to make it your Profession, that your particular Intention is to nourish your Soul by an Intimate (or hearty) strong and Generous Devotion. I say *Intimate and hearty*, or springing from

your Interiour , not doing any thing through meer *Custom*, but out of the *Choice* and Application of your Will: And, if some times, at unawares, the Exteriour Action prevents the Interiour Affection because it is customary to do such things, let the Affection follow after it as close as is possible. Strive to do your Outward Actions well, and endeavour to make them arise from your Interiour Acts; as the Fire breeds Cinders, and the Cinders do again kindle and nourish the Fire.

Moreover this Devotion of yours ought to be Strong. First, that it may bear the Shock of Temptations, which will most certainly assault those who serve GOD with a true Heart. Secondly, it must be Strong, that they may support the variety of Humours which is necessarily found in the Company we converse with ; and this is a very great Trial for those weak Souls, to have to do with whom our Circumstances oblige us to converse. Thirdly, it must be Strong to support

port it self against our own Imperfections, without disquieting or discouraging us; as also to attempt the perfect Correction and Amendment of them. It must be Strong to keep under our struggling Passions still ready to break loose: Strong to resist the Talk and rash Judgments of the World that they do not trouble our Interiour Peace. Strong to keep us Independent of our Affections, Friendships, and particular Inclinations, so that we do not square our Life according to them, but according to the Light and the Rules which true Piety dictates. Strong to keep our Souls unmoved, and in an even poize amidst the Tendernesses, Sweetnesses, and Consolations which come to us both from GOD and from Creatures: That we do not suffer our selves to be too much affected with them, or addicted to them to the prejudice of our Liberty of Spirit. Lastly, Strong, to encourage and enable us to make a Successfull War against our bad Inclinations, ill Habits, and natural Propensions.

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Thirdly, our Devotion must be Generous and Brave, that we be not stunn'd when Difficulties assault us, but rather that we rouse up our Courage to overcome them. For that Man cannot be said to be truly Valiant whose Courage is daunted, and not rather encreast and excited to a brisker Alacrity by Contrasts and Opposition.

Let us say with the Spouse, *Draw me, and I will run after thee for the attractive Odour of thy Perfumes.* The Divine Lover of our Souls leaves us oft times entangled and sticking fast in the sordid Pitch and Birdlime of our own Miseries, to the end that we may know more assuredly that our Deliverance comes from him; as also that we may hold this precious favour in higher value and Estimation. Let us not fear then to cry *we will run after you;* for, tho' of our selves we are not able even to stand, much less to run, yet thro' the assistance of his Grace, we may to that Degree run, that he will accept our Erdeavours.

But

But take heed of despising or undervaluing others. Let *Martha* follow in GOD's name her practical Affairs, but let her not controul *Magdalen*; Let *Magdalen* pursue her Divine Contemplation, but let her not take upon her to contemn *Martha*; for our Lord will undertake the cause of the Person that is censur'd. Use your self to bear a Heart supple and maniable, obedient and easy to condescend to any thing that's lawfull; and kindly Charitable, apt to receive all the Rayes which the Sun darts upon it. Blessed are the *Pliable* Hearts, for they will *never break*,

CHAP. V.

Of the Effects of the Love of GOD.

IN all your Actions, aim at GOD's Glory and at his Holy Love. For from hence proceeds the despising of the World, the despising our selves, the hatred of the World, the hatred of our selves, our for

getfulness of the World, our forgetfulness of our selves; The banishing of all Vice out of our Hearts, and the treasuring up of all Vertues there in their stead; the cutting off all Imperfection, the opening of our Hearts to receive all Perfection; Modesty in our Behaviour, Sweetness in our Speech, Affability in our Conversation, Respectfulness in our Countenance, Simplicity in our Heart, Meekness when we are injured, Humbleness when we are praised, Indifference to all things propos'd to us, if there be not more of GOD's Honour on one side than on the other, resignation in Adverfities, Patience in our Labours, Peace in the midst of our Troubles, Assurance in Dangers, Joy in our Sickneses, Fervour in our Prayers, Continnance in our Meditations, and Contentment in our Crosses.

Oh, how happy a thing it is not to live but *in* GOD, not to labour but *in* GOD, not to rejoice but *in* GOD. Hence forward, I do resolve thro' GOD's Heavenly Grace

I will no more be any thing to any Body, nor shall any Body be any thing to me, unless *in him* and *for him* only. I will endeavour from henceforth to look upon all the Souls of my Neighbours as placed in the holy Breast of my Saviour, to soften and melt my Soul, by this means, into Sweetness and dear Charity towards them. For, alas! He that regards his Neighbour as in any other place, will run a hazard neither to love him purely, nor constantly, nor equally; But *there*, I say, in *that* blessed Place, who would not love him, who would not suffer him and bear with all his Imperfections, and this without Trouble or Regret? For this Neighbour of mine is truly *there*, he is in the Bosome and in the Breast of my Divine Saviour: He is there as most beloved by him: Nay so amiable in his Eye that he suffers Death for him. Oh! Admirable Lover, whose Love is manifested in his Death, and his Death in his Love.

C H A P. VI.

Of the Love of our Neighbour.

MY dear Daughter, do not we Love our dear Jesus? If then we love him, we are to feed his *Sheep* and his *Lambs*; which, as himself has taught us, is the true Mark of a Faithfull Love. And with what are we to feed these dear little *Lambkins* of his? Certainly with nothing else but with *Love* it self; for either they do not (spiritually) live at all, or they live by their *Love*. But how are they to *Love*? The glorious St. *Bernard* has told us that the measure by which we are to *Love* God is to love him beyond Measure; and that there ought to be no stint in this *Love* of ours, but we must let it extend its branches as far as is possible. The *Love* of God keeps the first Rank, and the *Love* of our Neighbour follows in the next. You must love your Sisters with the whole strength of your Heart. We must not

not content our selves to love them as our selves, as the command of God obliges us; but, if we would observe the Rules of Evangelical Perfection, we ought to love them more than our selves. Love one another says our Saviour, as I have loved you. These words deserve our deepest Consideration, the true meaning of it, being that we must love them more than our selves; for 'tis *thus* our Saviour loved us, ever preferring our Interest before his own, and still continuing to do the same every time he gives us himself, and makes himself our Food when we receive the most Blessed Sacrament. He requires then of us that in our Love we prefer our Neighbour before our selves; and as he did all he could for us, excepting only that which might prejudice his own Salvation (for this, in regard he could not sin, was impossible) so he wills, and the Rule of perfection requires, that, to our utmost, we should do all we can for one another, except that only which hinders our Salvation.

Moreover.

Moreover this dear Charity ought to be solid, and strong, and sufficiently able to make us do and suffer any thing whatever for our Neighbour, and especially for those of our particular Community, that does not endamage the Health of our Soul.

Now this most Cordial Friendship has two Vertues which always bear her Company. One of them is called *Affability*, the other *Good Conversation*. Affability besprinkles with a certain sweetness those *serious* Affairs and Communications which we have with one another. And good Conversation renders us *Gracious* and *Agreeable* in our *Recreations*, and less serious affairs, which the course of our Life obliges us to have with our Neighbours.

CHAP. VII.

Of the Imitation of Christ our Lord.

Is a great Truth, and as such ought to be well reflected on, that nothing can settle our Souls in a more profound Tranquility in this World, than frequently to consider our Lord in his Afflictions. We shall behold there so much Contempt, such Calumnies, so much Poverty, Indigence and Abjection, such Pains, Torments, Nakedness, Injuries, and all sorts of most bitter Vexations, that, in comparison to those, we cannot complain of some part of them, when they happen to us, without a most unreasonable Injustice. My dear Daughter, a Heart that loves Jesus Christ cordially, loves his Death, his Pains, his Torments, his being spit upon, his Revilings, his Hungers, his Thirsts, his Ignominies, and whenever some any of these falls to his lot, he amorouslly embraces it, and comes off from it with ease.

You

You ought every Day, besides your customary Prayers, take a review of our Blessed Saviour, suffering the Pains with which he wrought our Redemption; and to consider what a happiness it had been for you to bear some part in them. Behold now that time is come, and that happy occasion is offer'd you; namely, when you endure contradictions in all your desires and designs, even those which seem to you most just; and yet, out of a fervent Love of the Cross of Christ, and his dolorous Passion, you heartily welcome them, and cry out with Blessed St. Andrew, Oh good Cross, so much beloved by my Saviour, when wilt thou receive me into thy Arms, that I may imitate thy Master?

The pure Love of our dear Lord is never practis'd so entirely, and perfectly as it is in the midst of Torments. To love God amidst sugred delights, is so far from a manly Virtue, that even little Infants, who guide themselves only by their Sense, would do the same.

But

But to love him amidst the Wormwood and Gall of Afflictions and Pains, is the proper Test of a faithful Love. To cry live *Jesus* while you see him gloriously Transfigur'd on Mount *Thabor*; even St. *Peter*, tho' at that time uncultivated in true Christianity, and scarce in his Senses, could easily afford; but to use the same affectionate Language when he is suffering on Mount *Calvary*, this pitch of unshaken and perfect Love; this, I say, none but his Blessed Mother, and that faithful loving Disciple, to whom he then gave her for her Son, did ever arrive at.

The heart which is perfectly united with GOD, cannot refrain from loving him, and to receive sweetly those amorous Rayes which he darts upon it: The words which GOD speaks to an afflicted heart which has recourse to his Goodness, are far sweeter than Honey, and more deliciously effectual to cure all the Ulcers of the Soul, than the most precious Balm.

C H A P. VIII.

*How to exercise our selves in the
Imitation of our Blessed Saviour.*

YOU may draw excellent motives of Holy Love from all the actions which our most amiable and charming Jesus practis'd during his whole Life. When any occasion is offer'd of exercising any Virtue, cast back a short glance upon the manner how our Blessed Lord did exercise the same while he liv'd here among us ; and thence stir up your Courage, animated with Love, to imitate his Holy Example, and with alacrity cry out; *Well, let's on then, let's follow our Glorious Leader, let's Imitate our perfect and holy Pattern Christ Jesus :* For when you are to Pray, relieve the Poor, give Counsel to any, remain solitary and retir'd, enter into Conversation with others, or suffer some trouble or contradiction : Call to mind in what

what manner our Lord did in diverse occasions perform the said Duties, and immediately stir up your Spirit, and say, let me on, and follow my Savionr ; tho' there were no other reason to do this and more, but only that my dear Master show'd me by his Example the way how to do it : This alone is sufficient to convince me that 'tis my duty. Nor let any think this exercise is tedious, or long, it may be perform'd at one single glance of our mind, or one affectionate sigh, saying within our self, *Dear Lord I am yours.*

C H A P. IX.

Of the Nature of a Religious State.

A Monastery or Convent is a Hospital for Persons who are Spiritually sick or wounded, and come there to be cur'd ; and to this end they expose themselves to suffer Bleeding, Launcing, Cutting, Searing, and the bitterest sorts of Medicines,

elines, and ways of Curing : Where-
fore, my dear Daughter, make full ac-
count that this is the State you have
undertaken, and give no ear to what
self love shall tell you to the contrary,
but sweetly and amorously embrace
this holy State, and settle in your
mind this blessed resolution, That
you must either be *Cur'd* there, or
Die there ; and thence say to your
self, since I will not Die Spiritually,
I do heartily submit my self to my
Cure, and all the methods to com-
pass it, tho' never so harsh ; and I
will beg of my Physicians not to
spare me, but let me endure all the
means that are proper to gain my
Souls health.

Have a great care you do not
take hence occasion to disquiet your
self, that you cannot so suddenly
quiet the various motions of your
peccant Humours. Do you well
consider what a Convent is ? 'Tis
an Academy, or House of exact
Correction, where every Soul must
learn to suffer her self to be hand-
led, smooth'd, and polish'd ; that
being at length well fram'd and
plain'd,

plain'd, she may the better be fitted, joyn'd, and fix'd more exactly to the Will of GOD: 'Tis an evident sign of perfection to be willing and desirous to be Corrected; for 'tis the principal fruit of Humility which makes us acknowledge we stand in need to be rectify'd.

C H A P. X.

Of Mortification.

Daugter, self-love never dies but with our Body: We must always sensibly feel its open Attacks, or perceive its secret Ambushes, as long as we live in this place of Exile. 'Tis enough that we never yield to it with such a consent as is voluntary, deliberate, and fixt. These troublesome Inclinations of ours are precious occasions given us by God, that we may exercise our faithfulness towards him, by taking care to repress and subdue them. As soon as ever you perceive you have swarv'd from that duty, repair your fault by some

some contrary action of Sweetnes, Humility, and Charity towards those Persons to whom you found some repugnance to submit your selves; for knowing on what side your Enemies must assault you, it behoves you to set your self stily to oppose them, and to fortify your self where you are attackt: You must still be ready to make head against them, and counterbuff your ill habits and inclinations; you must recommend your endeavours to the assistance of Divine Grace, and in every occasion to calm and sweeten your Spirit, laying all Thoughts aside but those which seem most proper to secure to you the victory.

To this end we must Crucify in our selves all our Affections; particularly those which are most lively and stirring, by a perpetual moderation, and by weakning those actions which proceed thence: We must, I say, bridle them in strictly, that they do not start from us with that Impetuosity with which our impatient Nature would hurry them; nor must they at that disquiet

quiet season proceed from our own Will, but from the Will of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Peace. Above all; let us keep our Heart in a sweet and charitable Temper towards our Neighbour, especially when the disgust is most prevalent; for then we may be assur'd that 'tis not for his own sake, but our Saviour's that we love him; which renders our Love most excellent, and highly valuable, as being in that case more pure and unsully'd by any Temporary motives.

C H A P. XI.

Against Proper Judgment.

YOU ask me, my dear Daughter, if to be addicted to ones own Opinion be a thing contrary to Perfection? To which I answer, that to be subject, or addicted to have Opinions of our own, or not to have them, is neither Morally good, nor bad, being meerly *Natural*. Every one has some Opinion or other of his own;

own ; but this does not hinder us from arriving at Perfection, so that we be not wedded to them, and are fond of them ; for 'tis only the *Love* of our own sentiments, which keeps us imperfect, nay, which is infinitely contrary to Perfection; and this is that which I have often told you that the *Love* of our proper Judgment, and the *Value* we set upon it, is the cause why there are so few perfect Souls. You will ask what must be done then to mortify this Inclination? You must retrench the diet which nourishes it. It comes into your mind that such a one does such a thing untowardly, and that it would be much better were it done as you apprehend. Wave that Thought, and apply your self to some other thing, saying within your self, Alas ! Why do I concern my self about a matter that does me no harm ? It is always far better to pass by such things by a simple neglect , than to stand searching for reasons to correct our selves, or find that we are in the wrong ; For instead of doing this, our

our Understanding, which is pre-occupied with its own particular Judgment, will make us take the thing by the wrong handle ; so that instead of retracting our Opinion, it will present to us many reasons (perhaps false ones too) to maintain it, and to vouch it to be good : Wherefore it is the more wholesome advice to disregard it, and to send it packing as soon as we perceive it, before we know what it will say for it self.

When either out of Charity, or Obedience we are requir'd to give our Advice concerning any Question propos'd to us ; it is best to give it plainly, and simply ; but for the rest, or whether it be follow'd or no, to remain indifferent. We may also give sometimes our Judgment of the Opinions brought by others, and alledge the reasons on which we ground our own sentiment ; but we must do this modestly and humbly, without despising the sentiment of others, or contesting to make our own Opinion take place, and be preferr'd. Perhaps

haps. you will ask whether it nourishes the Imperfection lately spoken of, if we seek occasion to talk afterwards with those who were of our sentiment, after the Resolution is taken already, what's to be done, and the Question is determin'd? I answer there is no doubt, but this nourishes the Inclination to our proper Judgment, and consequently is not free from some Imperfection: For this is a certain sign that such a one is not dispos'd to submit to the Judgment of others, but bent, at least inclin'd, to follow his own. Wherefore, the matter under debate being determin'd, we ought no more to *think* of it, than we ought to *talk* of it, unless it happen to be a thing notably Bad; for, in that case, some expedient may be still found to wave the Execution, and put a remedy to the harm that otherwise would have ensu'd by it: But this must be done with as much Charity as may be, and insensibly too, without shocking any ones Credit, or giving less Commendation to whatever was

Good

Good in that sentiment, than what was justly due.

The only true Cure for proper Judgment, is to *wave* that which is suggested to our Thoughts, and apply them to some better object ; for if we give Reins to our ranging thoughts, and let our attention ramble over all the Opinions that come into our mind in every occasion, and encounter; what can follow hence, but continual Distractions, and Impediments to more profitable things, and more properly conducing to our Perfection, which will render us incapable and indispos'd to perform our Prayers as we ought ? For having given up the liberty of our Spirit to amuse our selves in such trifling bagatells, it will be apt still to plunge forwards, and will produce Thoughts upon Thoughts, Opinions upon Opinions, and Reasons upon Reasons, which cannot fail of turmoiling us with many unfortunate Distractions in our Prayers ; our Prayer being indeed nothing else but a total application of our Soul, and all her Faculties to GOD :

Whence, while she squanders ~~of the~~
 Thoughts upon unprofitable ~~them,~~
 fles, she becomes less able to ~~them,~~
 der attentively those Holy My~~hem,~~
 ries which are the subject of ~~they v~~
 Prayer. 'Tis true, indeed, that ~~old~~
 lies not in our power to hinder ~~ther~~
 first motion of Complaisance ~~whi~~
 present it self when our Opinion ~~his i~~
 approv'd and follow'd ; this, ~~art]~~
 say, is altogether inevitable ; ~~this]~~
 we must not amuse or detain ~~will i~~
 selves in this Thought : Let ~~ion,~~
 when we come to reflect, ~~bi~~
 God the Author of all wise ~~Co~~
 sel for it ; and this done, let us ~~re a~~
 on with our other exercises, ~~whi~~
 out being in pain that we had ~~tho~~
 Complaisance, no more than ~~ndr~~
 should if we had found some lit~~ti~~
 sentiment of trouble or regret, ~~ve~~
 our Opinion were not well-lik~~whi~~
 and follow'd.

You see here what I had to say ~~repe~~
 you concerning the subject of ~~the~~
 first Question ; by which I instru~~ra~~
 ed you, that barely to *have* Opin~~on~~
 ons was not contrary to Perfectio~~iv~~
 but to *have a Selfish Love and Este~~re~~*

of them; for if we did not esteem
 them, we should not be so fond of
 them; and if we were not fond of
 them, we should not much care tho'
 they were rejected, nor be so apt to
 hold our own still, and say, Let
 others think as they will, but as for
 my part, —— Do you know what
 this imperfect saying [as for my
 part] means? Why it plainly means
 this; I'll not submit my self, but
 will still persist firm in my Resolu-
 tion, and in my own Opinion. This
 proper, or, rather, selfish Judgment,
 I have often said, is the last thing
 we are willing to part with; and
 'tis one of the things that are
 most necessary to be parted with,
 and renounc'd, if we intend to arrive
 at true Perfection. Without this
 we can never gain true Humility,
 which forbids us to value and esteem
 our selves, or any thing that has
 dependance on our selves. If then
 we have not a high esteem of the
 practice of this Virtue; we shall
 still be in hazard of thinking our
 selves something better than we
 are, and that others do owe us

some surplusage of esteem above what they owe others; which suit but badly with Humility. Be enough of this Subject.

CHAP. XII.

Of Difficulties.

AS for the Difficulties which occur in GOD's service, do not disquiet your self, nor put your Spirit out of humour, no, by no means. Be assured 'tis nothing but your ghostly Enemy the Devil, who hovers about your Soul; prying and searching if he can spy any Door open, and ungarded where he may enter. 'Tis no more than he did to St. Anthony, St. Catharine, and innumerable other good Souls. And must we vex our selves because he is thus wickedly importune and troublesome? GOD forbid; our Lord will make him raise his Siege when he sees his time. Oh my Child of little Faith, what is it you fear? Be not at all frightened. You are

are tost indeed, upon the Sea, by the Wind and Waves; but 'tis Jesus Christ who stretches out his hand to you as he did to St Peter. Lay fast hold of it; go on joyfully; do not stand speculating or discanting upon the ill plight you are in. Fear nothing I say; GOD will not suffer you to be lost, so you do not let go your hold, but live according to your good resolutions. Let the World be turned Topsy-turvy, let nothing but Darkness, Smoak, and confus'd Hurly-burly surround you on all sides; GOD is still with you; and tho' this your GOD dwells in Darkness and on Mount Sina, all cover'd with Smoak, Thunder, Lightning and dreadfull Noise, his mercifull help is never the farther from us; not at all certainly.

Be not fondly tender over your self; tender Mothers spoil their Children. Do not give way to weeping or bewailing your self, nor be stunn'd with the trouble, and violence which sensibly affect you. GOD permits them to per-

fect you in Humility by letting you see clearly how abject, vile, and helpless you are of your self. This Temptation is to be combated only by throwing your self entirely upon GOD, by detaching your self from all Creatures, who are (without him) as helpless as your self; by applying your self to your good Creatour, who is all your strength; and with continual affections for the holy Virtue of Humility, and Simplicity of Heart.

Be still equally Complaisant to all those with whom you converse, and do not estrang your self from their Company; nor suffer your Spirit to be stunn'd with the Difficulties that occur. How can you expect to gain any thing that is precious without some trouble, and painstaking? Above all, labour all you are able to keep up the Superiour part of your Soul; not by entertaining your self with *sensible* feelings and Consolations; but by holding firm to your Resolutions, good purposes, and to those effects, and exercises with which Faith, your Reli-

igious

ligious Rule, the Command of your Superiours, and your own Reason shall inspire you.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Sickness.

Tis your Duty to bear the Cross of our Lord in your Sickneses with Devotion and Love; keep your Will free, both in asking for, and taking, those Remedies which are prescribed you. Be patient, mild, and courageous in suffering your Pains. He that can preserve this sweetness and gentleness amidst his Pains and Languishings, and keep his Interiour Peace among the Multiplicity and bustling noise of business, is upon the brink of Perfection.

Trouble not your self to make long Prayers when you are sick, but endeavour to make your very Infirmitie becomes a Prayer, by offering them to him who loved your Infirmitie so much, that in the Day

of his Nuptials, and the greatins
Rejoycing of his Heart, he ma Glor
choice of those for the most glorie
ous Jewels in his Crown. . . . in the

Holy Love has taught us by his
Lesson that we ought in imitation of
our Saviour to endure his Cross
with Humility ; as being unworthily
of that Honour to suffer any thire by
for his Sake, who has suffered You
much for ours ; and with Patiencie
even to Death, since he would not
come down from his Cross till after
his Death, as was the pleasure our
his Eternal Father. And, in what
other manner can we better witness
the sincere Fidelity which we owe
our Lord, than amidst our Paines
and Tribulations ? Besides, this mort
tal Life of ours is such, that we
are oblig'd to eat a pound of Worm
wood for an Ounce of Honey. This
is only our Sauce, that is, our
Meat.

You will perhaps ask how you
can serve GOD in the middle of
your sicknesses ? And I answer, you
may serve him in that season the
best of all, by offering him all the
Pains

eatains you suffer. Oh! how great
 maGlory is it to suffer well and as
 gloe ought ! When our Lord was
 in the Cross he was declared *King*
 tly his Enemies themselves ; and
 ationsequently those good Souls that
 Croffer their Cross, humbly, and pa-
 rtiently because such is his Will,
 hire by doing this declared *Queens*.
 d Would you know what is the only
 ending for which the Angels do envy
 no ? 'Tis this ; that we can suffer
 fter our Lord, and they cannot : Let
 e our InfirmitieS be as great as Job's,
 hat you may remember how it was
 helid of him, that in all these occasi-
 ons *Job sinned not* ; and why ? But
 in because he put his firm hope in
 OD. Take Courage then, my
 wear Children ! Behold your Spouse,
 mour King, how he is crown'd with
 his horns , and all torn upon the
 Cross ; which done, consider that
 is not fit the Crown of the Bride
 should be more sweet and delicious ;
 man was that of her Bridgroom ;
 according to that saying of his,
My well beloved is amongst Virgins,
a Rose amongst Thorns. Such a

of his Nuptials, and the greater Pains
Rejoycing of his Heart, he made a Glo
choice of those for the most glori
ous Jewels in his Crown.

Holy Love has taught us this
Lesson that we ought in imitation
of our Saviour to endure his Cross
with Humility ; as being unworthy
of that Honour to suffer any thing
for his Sake, who has suffered so
much for ours ; and with Patience
even to Death, since he would not
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his Death, as was the pleasure of
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Pains

te Pains you suffer. Oh! how great a Glory is it to suffer well and as we ought ! When our Lord was on the Cross he was declared *King* by his Enemies themselves ; and consequently those good Souls that suffer their Cross, humbly, and patiently because such is his Will, are by doing this declared *Queens*. Would you know what is the only thing for which the Angels do envy us ? 'Tis this ; that we can suffer for our Lord, and they cannot : Let your Infirmitie be as great as *Job's*, yet you may remember how it was said of him, that in all these occasions *Job sinned not* ; and why ? But because he put his firm hope in GOD. Take Courage then, my dear Children ! Behold your Spouse, your King, how he is crown'd with Thorns , and all torn upon the Cross ; which done, consider that it is not fit the Crown of the Bride should be more sweet and delicious, than was that of her Bridgroom ; according to that saying of his, *My well beloved is amongst Virgins, as a Rose amongst Thorns.* Such a

Situation is the natural place of this Flower ; and no better than that is the place of our Heavenly Spouse. Accept then heartily a Thousand times a Day this Cross, and kiss it affectionately for his Love who sends it, that you may be like himself ; and so, a fitting Bride for him. Oh ! how eternally happy will you be if you suffer for GOD's sake, or, in Conformity to his holy Will, this short and small affliction he sends you ! Represent to your self your Saviour Crucified just before your Eyes, and then weigh with your self which of you does more suffer one for the other, and I believe, you will find your self vastly behind hand with him upon that account.

The Bed of sickness is the School of Humility. It teaches us how fleeting, weak, and miserable we are. 'Tis there that we discover the Imperfections of our Souls : while we are in other places, which are pleasant, they hide themselves, and remain with us ; but there they break out and show themselves.

'Tis

'Tis one of the greatest profits Affliction brings with it, that it makes us see our own nothingness, and the defects of our bad Inclinations. I say not this that it should give you trouble, (for 'tis no news it should be so in corrupt Nature) but, that you should still endeavour more and more to cleanse and purifie your Sprit, and have recourse to God, whose Grace only can work that good effect.

Vex not your self that while you continue sick you cannot Meditate : For to endure patiently GOD's hand when it afflicts us, is at least a good Equivalent to mental Prayer. It is better to *bear* the Cross of our Lord, than only to *think* on it. Endure then patiently all the Incommodities which attend your Sickness without murmuring, or giving way to your Passions ; which at that season are apt to show themselves upon every little occasion. My advice is, that you exercise your self strongly at that time in an ardent Love, and desire that GOD's Holy Will be

be done in you in the Abnegation or refusal of Exteriour Contentments, and in sweetness of Spirit amidst the bitter Pangs of your Body ; this being the most excellent Sacrifice you can ever hope to offer up to the Almighty.

Practice not only a faithfull Love but also a tender, sweet, and kind affection to all those that are about you. For I tell you out of the experience I have had, that tho' sickness does not bereave us of our Charity, yet it will to some degree soure our Nature, and alter that sweet humour'd kindness which we ought to bear our Neighbour, if we stand not well upon our Guard. In a word, let your InfirmitieS be what they will, whether of Body or Mind, you ought to suffer them sweetly and *calmly* ; humbling your self indeed before GOD, but without fretting, or giving way to the least discouragement.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Calumnies.

AS for *Calumnies*, the best method we can take to repair the Ruins of our Credit they have made, is to despise the Tongues which were the Instruments of them, and to answer them with a holy Modesty and Compassion. The honour of Virtuous Souls is under the Protection of GOD; and tho' to humble them, and exercise their Patience, he suffers them to be shaken, yet he never permits them to be trampled under foot, but, generally, he suddenly relieves them.

And with good reason ought you not be over sollicitous what the World says of you. He who has wholly and without reserve given himself up to GOD, ought to judge it an Impertinent thing to be so highly concern'd for his reputation. As for me, says holy *David*, *I am an Abject, and despis'd, yet, I have not*
for

for all that forgotten thy *Justifications*. Let GOD do as he pleases with our Life, our Reputation, and our Honour, since they are all *his* ; if our disesteem serves to bring more glory to him, ought we not to think it *Glorious* for us to be esteem'd and *Abject* ? *I Glory*, says St. Paul, *in my Infirmitie*s, that the *Vertue* of *Jesus Christ* may dwell in me. What *Virtue* of *Jesus Christ* ? What but his *Humility*, his *Resignation*, his *Abjection*, or *Humiliation* of himself.

Daughter, take heed that in your *Carriage* to those good *Sisters* that dis-estimate and speak slightly of you, you do not make any show, misbecoming an unchangable *Humility*, *Sweetness*, and a *Friendly*, and *hearty Candour* ; nor set your self to stand up in your own *defence*. There happen some times *human Temptations* among the *Servants* of *God*. If we have true *Charity* in our hearts, we ought peaceably to bear with them. Let all the *World* say what it will, this is still most assuredly true, that he who loves most

most shall be most beloved ; and that he who is most beloved, shall be most Glorified. Love God then cordially, and sincerely ; and for the Love of him, all Creatures ; and particularly those who despise you ; and trouble your self no farther, but only to keep your self humble, and our Lord will most certainly give you a Crown of Glory.

Nor let Calumnies give you any Trouble ; but be assured that while your Soul is Virtuous, and truly resigned into the hands of our Lord, all sorts of such attacks will vanish like smoak before the Wind ; and the greater the Wind is, the sooner they will disperse, scatter, and disappear.

The Mischief of Calumny, and the Wounds it inflicts are never so well cur'd, as by letting them pass without taking any notice of them ; by despising that, which would despise us ; and by witnessing, by our undaunted, and unmov'd firmness that we are above its reach. St. *Gregory* comforted an afflicted Bishop with these

these words. Alas if our heart were in Heaven, the Winds of Contradiction would not shake it at all. Oh! how true it is, that he who renounces the World, is above the World, and that nothing that passes here below, can hurt or touch him.

Cast your self at the feet of our Saviour Crucified, and see how many Injuries he receiv'd. Beg of him by that sweetness with which he receiv'd them, that he would give you strength to endure those little pittances of them which fall to your share as being his Servant.

CHAP. XV.

How we must bear our selves when Contradictions happen to us.

When Afflictions, or Contradictions, happen to you from any one, take heed you do not give way to complaints; but on the contrary, strive with all your might to preserve your heart in Tranquillity. But if it should so light, that some sally of Impatience starts from you,

you, as soon as ever you perceive it reduce your heart to sweetness, and Peace. Our good Lord loves those Souls that are tost in the Waves, and Tempests of Temptations, so they do but resignedly welcome the troublesome Vexation as coming from his hands ; and like valiant Souldiers, strive to preserve their Fidelity untainted, amidst all their Combats and Assaults.

CHAP. XVI.

Of Patience.

Y
OU must by little and little tame the Vivacity of your Nature, and reclaim it to Patience, Sweetness, Humility, and Affability ; and not weary the Ears of your Superiour, with complaints about childish Trifles, which happen among the weaker Sex, not worth the regarding of any sober or wise Christian.

Your serious business is to live up to GOD's Will ; and, for the Love

he

he bears you, to suffer quietly your Afflictions. This you must do, if you would be a true Servant of GOD; which consists not being always caressed with his Consolations, always in sweetness, always without feeling any aversion or repugnance to what's good; for, at this rate, the greatest Saint could never have been GOD's Servants. To be a true Servant of GOD, is to be Charitable towards your Neighbour; to lay up in the Superior part of your Soul an unshaken, and inviolable resolution to follow the Will of GOD: This requires a profound Humility and Simplicity, divesting your self of all self-Reliance, and putting your whole Trust in GOD; and to never cover and rise up again as often as you shall hap to fall: To be firm to your self, and continue to be the same person, and in the same humour, when you are slighted and undervalued; and to bear gently and calmly the Imperfections of others.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Temptations.

A S for Temptations, never trouble your self to give them
 any answer ; nor to seem to heed
 your Enemy. Tho' he makes a great
 noise within you, 'tis not a straws-
 t matter; keep your quiet and suffer
 with Patience. Prostrate your
 self before GOD, and remain still
 at his Feet. He understands very
 well, that your meaning is to beg
 this Assistance, tho' you are not able
 to form your Petition into words.
 Do not give way to fall a Reasoning
 or Arguing with the Devil, and he
 will be weary of bawling, and will
 let you alone. *Very fine, said St.*
Anthony, I see you, tho' I will not
do you the Honour to regard you: Let
us only attend to our good Saviour,
who is attentive to Succour us in
a better and more solid way, than
all the empty Flourishes and Brava-
does of the Enemy are to hurt us.
Let us calmly and firmly expect his
help.

help. 'Tis for this end that he permits these Illusions of the Devil to fright us, and lets the Bugbears of Temptations run about skipping this way, and that, in our Fancy. No matter, tho they perpetually cross our way. 'Tis an excellent sign, when the Enemy beats and thunders furiously at the Gate ; for it shows he cannot get what he would be at. Take special notice of this, that you may avoid Scruples. Do not set your self to Combat the Temptations that trouble you, by contesting or disputing with them ; but simply and merely turn your Thoughts and Heart to *Jesus Christ Crucified*, as if you were going to give an affectionate Embrace to his pierced Side, or his wounded Feet. I know no plainer Temptations, as to your Circumstances, than to break Vows that you may Fast ; to presume that to be solitary is the best for you, when 'tis worse for the Community ; to wish to live to your self alone, that you may live better to GOD ; to enjoy perfectly your own Will, that you may bet-
ter

ter perform the Will of GOD. What strange Chimera's are these ? To conceit that a wilful, humourous, harsh, eager, strong-head Inclination (or rather Imagination or Fancy) is a kind of Heavenly Inspiration ! What a Contradiction is it, and what Nonsense for any to leave of singing Praises to GOD, and to keep silence, (as it were in despight) at the Divine Offices ordain'd by the Church, meerly because it suites best with their humour to praise him in a corner ! How unsufferable an Extravagance is this !

Sometimes in Temptations one may have recourse to Exteriour Penance and Mortification ; for the Sense of the Pain puts the Temptation out of their Thoughts, and invites the Divine Mercy to assist us ; and the Devil is more willing to give over his Siege, when he sees our intestin Enemy, and his Confederate the Flesh, subdu'd and kept under.

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C H A P. XVIII.

Of Desires.

THIS oft times good to *Desire*, with but we ought to see that our strack Desires are *well order'd*; they ought to spring out (as it were) in their proper season, and not to exceed with our Power. God does more require of us *Fidelity* in performing well those little matters which he, has put in our power, than an ardent *Zeal* to atchieve great matters which are beyond our ability to wish compass.

Practise those *Mortifications* which present themselves to you most frequently; for this is your necessary duty: Embrace heartily those *Crosses* which our Lord sends you, without minding of what nature they are; for they are, for that very regard the more precious.

There are certain Desires which tyrannize over the Heart; they will needs be *Absolute*, and hate that

any should oppose their designs. They would have no darkness while they are at their Devotions, but all Noonday; they would have all their Exercises sweet and pleasant, without any Repugnance or distraction: They would not have any Temptation give us a sensible trouble: Nor are they contented with such Food as is of a good Juice and Nourishment; but they would have it sweetned with Sugar, and scented with Musk. But such as these are the Desires of a Milk-sop-Devotion, which I would to wish you to avoid. Believe me, my Daughter, those Meats that are sweet, if given to little Infants, do engender Worms; which is the reason why our Lord, to make them wholesome to us, mingles bitter things with them. The Courage which we ought to have in serving God, must not be Nice and Dainty, but strong and hardy; and such a one as, while it says resolute-ly, and without reserve, *Let Jesus live in me*, regards not whether it encounters with sweet or bitter, Light

Light or Darkness. Let us, ~~own~~
dear Daughter, follow this way ~~contir~~
an effectual, strong, and inflexibl We
Love of our GOD.

CHAP. XIX.

Of Dryness in Prayer.

W^Henever *Dryness* in Prayer
afflicts you, turn your ou
Thoughts to your dear Saviour ~~all th~~
the Garden of *Olivet*, and see wh^{ch} Divin
a disconsolate Dereliction he ~~subrou~~
fered. Consider how this deament
Son of the Eternal Father, hav^{ing} no ou
begg'd Comfort of him, thinks n^oth^{ng}
more of it; but prepares himself to 'T
execute valiantly and couragious^{ly} him
the work of our Redemption. Al^lings,
ter you have addrest your fervent^{ly} usi^{ng}
Prayer to GOD to give you com^{fort}, and he is not pleas'd to grant it^{giv}
it, cast it out of your Thought^s with
and stir up your Courage to do the Wh^{ole}
work of your Salvation upon the age
Cross he sends you, in such a manⁿature
ner as if you were never to com^{ere}
down

rown again from that Cross, but
y continue on it all your Life.

We are to contemplate, and speak
o GOD in Thunder and Whirl-
winds ; we are to consider him in
he Bush, nay among Fire and
Thorns ; and to do this with profit
o our Souls, we are to put off our
shoes, and the common ways the
generality treads, and to make an
adventure resignation and abnegation
of our own Wills. But we ought
all the while rest assured that the
Divine Goodness , which has
brought us unto those afflictive Tor-
ments, will strengthen us so, if we
do our part, that we shall come out
hence unburnt, or unsing'd.

'Tis his Will that we should serve
him without Gusts or sensible Feel-
ings, nay with Contrasts and Con-
trivisions of Spirit This perhaps
will give you no satisfaction, but
gives him content: He is pleas'd
with it, tho' it displeases you.
Wherefore your duty is so to ma-
nage and curb the briskness of your
Nature by holy Humility, as if you
were to live all your Life in tha-

troublesome Perplexity, without hoping to be releast from it.

Alas ! My dear Daughter, our Nature inclines us to an affectionate Love of sweet, pleasing, and delicious Consolation ; yet, for all that, the roughness of this Spiritual Dryness yields better fruit, and is more profitable for us. And tho' St. Peter was in love with Mount Thabor, and fled from Mount Calvary ; yet his Soul reapt more fruit from this latter, than from the former ; and the Blood which was shed in the one, is more to be valu'd than the Brightness which shin'd in the other. Take good heed lest the Consideration of your own nothingness, does not perplex you, however it may Humble, Sweeten, and abase you : 'Tis only Self-love, that makes us Impatient when we see our selves Vile and Abject.

You know well, that at the Birth of our Saviour, there were heard Divine Hymns of the Angelical Quiristers. The Holy Scripture tells you this, and you may be as sur'd of it ; but it does not tell

you,

you, that our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph, who were nearest to our Saviour, heard this Melody of the Angels, or saw those Marvelous Lights; on the contrary, instead of hearing the Angels sing, they heard the Holy Infant weep, and saw only, by the borrow'd Light of some common Lamp, the Divine Child bedewed with Tears, and shaking at the Rigour of the Cold.

Hold this certain, that the gracious Favour of meditating well, is not recovered by any struggling effort of your own Spirit, but by a sweet and affectionate perseverance full of a profound Humility.

C H A P. XX.

*How to exercise our Union with
GOD, amidst our Dryness.*

First Point. HAVING prostrated, and profoundly humbled your self before GOD, adore his Sovereign Goodness, and fix your Thoughts attentively on his Gracious Pleasure and Early Bounty, which from all Eternity did name you by your Name, and determin'd to save you ; amongst other things ordering for you this present Day, that in it you might come to exercise those works which dispose you for Eternal Life, and Salvation ; according to the words of the Prophet ; *I have Lou'd thee with an Eternal Love, and therefore out of my pity and mercy I had for thee, I have drawn thee to me.*

Second Point. Building upon this true Thought, you are to unite your Will with the Will of your most bountiful Heavenly Father, with

with these or the like words :
 " O most kind and merciful Will
 " of my GOD, be you for ever,
 " and in all things. Accomplisht !
 " O Eternal design of the Will of
 " my GOD, I Adore you, I Con-
 secrate and Dedicate to you my
 " Will, that it may forever will
 " what you have eternally Will'd !
 " O make me do, both this day,
 " and for ever hereafter, your Di-
 vine Will in all things ! Yes,
 " my loving Creator, yes, my
 " dear Heavenly Father, be it so ;
 " such was your good plea-
 sure from all Eternity :
 " Yes, be it so ; O Infinite, and
 " Infinitely to be belov'd Good-
 ness ; let it be, O Eternal Will,
 " as you have Will'd ! Live and
 Reign in all the Acts of my Will,
 " and above them all, both now
 " and for ever.

Third Point. Next, invoke thus
 the Divine assistance, by crying
 out interiourly from the bottom
 of your heart ; " O GOD be you
 " my aid ; I am yours, save me.
 " Let your favourable hand con-

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 “ vine Will in all th'rs ! Yes,
 “ my loving Creator, yes, my
 “ dear Heavenly Father, be it so ;
 “ such was your good plea-
 “ sure from all Eternity :
 “ Yes, be it so ; O Infinite, and
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 “ as you have Will'd ! Live and
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 out interiourly from the bottom
 of your heart ; “ O GOD be you
 “ my aid ; I am yours, save me.
 “ Let your favourable hand con-

" duct and direct this your poor
 " miserable, and dejected creature.
 " Behold, O Lord, the
 " wretched and weak heart
 " mine, which has, thro' your
 " Grace, conceiv'd many
 " affections to serve you; but
 " alas! It is too weak and impo-
 " tent to bring any of them to
 " effect without your gracious as-
 " sistance.

Fourth Point. Then invoke the most
 Blessed *Mary*, your good Angel
 and all the Court of Heaven, their
 and your Saviour would
 please at this present to be prop-
 tious to you. This done, make
 strong, lively, and amorous Union
 of your Will with GOD's; and
 afterwards in all the Actions of that
 day, whether they be Spiritual or
 Corporal, still make frequent Re-
 unions; that is, renew and confirm
 afresh the Union made in the
 Morning; by only casting a simple
 interiour glance upon the Divine
 Goodness, and saying, after the
 manner of Consent or Acquiescence;
 Yes, Lord, yes, with all my heart;

or else, only yes Lord, yes, my Father, yes, yes. You may also now and then make the Sign of the Cross, or kiss it; for all this will put you in mind, and keep lively in your Thoughts the Resolutions you have made to submit your self wholly to the Will of GOD; that you do accept him for your only happiness, that you Adore him and Love him with all your Heart, and Unite your Will inseperably to his Sovereign Will and Pleasure.

Fifth Point. These affectionate wishes darted from the Heart, and these Interiour words must issue thence, or be pronounc'd Sweetly and Calmly; strongly, but quietly; and as it were distill'd gently upon the very point of your Will. By which means those Sacred Words which drop into the Soul, will penetrate better, than if they were made by Jaculatory Prayers and brisk fallies of the Spirit. Experience will inform you of this Doctrine, if you be Sincere and Humble.

C H A P. XXI.

*Concerning the Peace of the Soul,
and true Humility.*

There is nothing that gives us Trouble and Disquiet, but our self-love, and self-esteem; if we have not that melting tenderness of Heart, those delicious gusts and sentiments when we are at Prayer, we fall immediately into sadness and disorder. If we meet with any difficulties, if any rubs cross our designs, we bustle up presently, and exert all our strength to beat down those obstacles, and rid our selves of them; which cannot be done without hurry and disquiet. And whence comes all this, but because we will needs be virtuous, by having every thing go smoothly and currently according to our wishes, and (as it were) by eating nothing but Sugar; without casting our Eye on our Blessed Jesus, who prostrate on the Earth, sweats Blood with the anguish he suffer'd,

suffer'd thro' the Agonizing combat which he felt in his Interiour, by the contrariety and fight between the Natural affections of the Interiour part of his Soul, and the holy Resolutions of the Superiour. Let us do three things, my dear Daughter, and we shall preserve the Peace of our Soul.

The First is, To have a pure *Intention* to desire in all things the Honour and Glory of GOD.

The Second, Let us do all we are able to attain this end.

The Third, Let us fix this Truth in our minds, that GOD is call'd the *Prince of Peace*; and that wherever he is Absolute Master, he settles a profound, and total Peace in the Soul. 'Tis true indeed, that before he can establish this Peace in any place, he raises a War there first, by stripping the Heart and the Soul from their most dear, familiar, and customary affections; such as are an inordinate Love of themselves, self-reliance, and self-complaisance, &c. Yet even in doing this, we find some

D 5 degree

degree of Peace, by reason of our Conformity to the Will of GOD.

Consider our dear Saviour in the Garden, and you will find that to be *Prince of Peace*, is to preserve our Peace in the midst of War, and to enjoy sweetness in the midst of the bitterest Afflictions. Which will teach you that all those Thoughts that cause in you disquiet and turmoil of Spirit, do not at all come from GOD who is the *Prince of Peace*, but are Temptations of the Enemy; and therefore we ought to restrain their motions, and not to regard or take notice of them.

We must in every thing, and at all times live Peaceably, and this both in Sadness and in Joy. Is harm to be eschewed and avoided? Let us do it peaceably, quietly, and without disturbance. Is good to be done? Let us do that too peaceably; otherwise we shall fall into many faults, thro' Precipitancy and too much hast. Nay, let us observe the same conduct even in our works

of Penitence, and perform them peaceably. Behold, says the Holy Penitent Holy David, *The bitterest of the bitterness I suffer in Peace.* You ought to desire either to Love GOD, or to Die. There is no third or middle State desirable, but either *Love or Death*; for that Life which is without this Love, is worse than Death. We can never give a more certain proof of our Fidelity, than when we are beset on all sides with Contrarieties. Let it be your special care to turn your Soul to GOD when you are in Trouble and Disquiet. When you are wholly embarkt amongst Waves, and the most Tempestuous Hurricanes, then is the time to keep your Soul fixt upon Heaven, and say to your Lord; 'tis for you O my good GOD, 'tis for your sake I undertake this Voyage; be you my Guide, be you my Pilot. This done, comfort your self with this assurance, that when you once Arrive at your secure Harbour, the sweetness and content you will there experience, will quite efface and

and blot out the memory of the vexatious troubles you suffer'd in the way. Let us then pass on courageously through the most terrible storms, so we do but keep a right Heart, a good Intention, an Eye fixt still upon GOD, and a confidence plac'd only in him. Do this, I say, and never fret your self at the contrarieties which occur in your Conversing with the World: They will do you service in affording you occasions to practise those most precious and charming Virtues, which our Lord has recommended to you; and, believe me, true Virtue no more thrives in exterior re-pose and quiet, than the best Fishes are nourisht in the puddled standing Water of Fens or Marshes.

As for *Humility*, it makes our Heart kind and sweet, both towards the Perfect and Imperfect; towards *those* by *Respect*, towards *these* by *Compassion*. Humility makes us also welcome our Sufferings sweetly, by knowing that we deserve them; and those Goods that befall

befall us with a grateful reverence, by knowing that we do not deserve them at all.

Exercise your self then very much in Acts of Humility, and of Charity towards your Neighbour ; and be sure it will turn to a good account. It was fitting that Blessed *Magdalen* should first Wash the feet of our Lord, kiss them, and wipe them before she could be cordially United to him by Heavenly Meditation ; and pour her Ointment upon his Body, before she could pour forth the precious Balm of Contemplation upon his Divinity.

When you find your self Sick, or Over-weary'd, it must be your Exercise to accept and love Holy Abjection : By this means you will change the *Lead* of your lumpish heaviness into *Gold* ; nay, for more refin'd *Gold*, than are your most lively gaiety, and pleasantry of heart. Do not give way to any complaining Language, or say, you are miserable, unfortunate, or such like, but avoid them utterly ; for they are

are the Sallies of a Heart too much dejected and over-whelm'd with Temporal afflictions, and are not so properly to be call'd Impatience, as Indignation and Wrath.

Would you know in a word, my Daughter, what kind of Abjections are the best? I answer, they are those which your self did not chuse, or those which are least agreeable to you; or rather, those to which you have no kind of Inclination; or to speak exactly, those which your Vocation and Profession put upon you.

Walk always in Simplicity, and Humility, without regarding whence you come, but in whose Company you walk. 'Tis in Company of your King, your Spouse, and your GOD Crucify'd. And what is it to walk with your Spouse Crucify'd, but to Abase, Humble, and despise your self? And this even to the Death of his Passion, nay till the Death on the Cross. But observe, my good Daughter, that I tell you once more, that this Abasing,

Abasing, Humbling, and Disregard of your self, must be practiced Sweetly, Peaceably, Constantly ; nay moreover Cheerfully, and Joyfully. If any murmur at your good Actions, and that you resent it, be sure you do this Humbly, and Lovingly, and then their Murmurings will be turn'd to Blessings.

God has been pleas'd to cast his Eyes upon you, to serve him in an affair of Consequence, and to draw you into an Uncommon, and Excellent sort of Life ; and to this end, he has call'd you to Religion ; you ought therefore to have regard to the Choice he has made of you, and faithfully to comply with his Intention. Excite then continually your Soul to be Humble, and your Humility, will never want Courage. GOD does call to his Service, things that *are not*, as well as those which *are*, and serves himself of those which are as it were *nothing*, as well as those which are *Great* and *Estimable*, for the greater Glory of his Name. Continue then in your

your Abjection, as in a kind of Hatred, of any self-Excellence of your own, and be Couragiously, and Magnanimously Humble in him of who plac'd the great effort of his Power, in the Humility of the Cross.

Cast your Eye on the Variety
of Saints, who beautify the Hea-
venly *Jerusalem*, and ask them by
what steps of Virtue, they clim'd
up to Heaven; and they will tell
you, that the *Apostles* arriv'd there
principally by *Love*, the *Martyrs*
by *Constancy*, the *Doctors* by *Study*
of *Holy* things, or *Meditation*, the
Confessors by *Mortification*, the
Virgins by *Purity* of *Heart*, and
All of them in general by *Humility*.

CHAPTER

C H A P. XXII.

Of Generosity, or Christian Valour.

I Can do all things, says St. Paul, in him who strengthens me. Humility, and Generosity, must ever go hand in hand. Humility makes us disconfident of our selves, and Generosity makes us place all our Confidence in GOD. There are some, who amuse themselves with a False and Foppish Humility which hinders them from considering in themselves, the good Gifts, which GOD has bestow'd on them; such Men are much in the wrong; the Goods which GOD has put in us, require to be Acknowledg'd, Esteem'd, and highly Honour'd. The Common Adage, or Proverb, *Know thy self*, is not only to be understood of the Knowledge of our own *Vileness* and *Misery*, but also of knowing the *Excellence* and *Dignity* of our Souls, which are capable to be united to the Deity, by that Sanctifying Goodness, which

which has given us a certain Instinct, making us always pretend, and tend to this Union, in which consists all our Happiness.

That Humility, that does not produce Generosity, is most certainly False and Counterfeit. For after Humility has told us, *I can do nothing, I am naught but a mere nothing*, it ought to make place for Christian Generosity, which pronounces boldly, There is nothing there can be nothing, which I cannot do while I put my trust in GOD, who can do all things; and under the Buckler of this Confidence, does Couragiously Enterprize all that he commands, let it be never so difficult. Let a Soul thus arm'd, set her self to execute what GOD commands in the Simplicity of her Heart, and GOD will sooner do a Miracle, than fail to give her Power, to accomplish what she undertakes; because, by relying solely on him, she makes his power hers. Say, then undauntedly within your self, since GOD has call'd me to such a high State of Perfection,

Perfection, who is he that dares pretend, to hinder me from arriving at my End, since it belongs to him, to perfect that work, to which none but himself gave a Beginning. But this must be done without presumption, and must not excuse us from standing on our Guard, lest thro' our Carelessness we come to fall short. And yet this very Confidence thus grounded, makes us more Vigilant and Carefull, to do our utmost to advance our Souls in Perfection.

It may indeed very well happen, that the Inferiour part of our Souls, gives some trouble to the Superiour, and hinders it from prosecuting her good Designs, or Intentions; but a Soul truly Generous, laughs at all such attempts and slighteth them; and instead of heeding them, she sets her self with a willing Simplicity, to perform the Exercise which is enjoyn'd her; without speaking so much as one word, or doing the least Action that signifies any Sentiment, that she has of her own Inability or Incapacity.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXII.

Of Tranquility of Spirit.

W^Hile we are engaged in busi-
ness, we must study to pre-
serve still a due *Calmness* or *Tran-
quility* of heart, and to keep our
Soul (as well as we may) sweet-
ly employ'd in Prayer. Let the
Soul at such Seasons, take her own
Flight. If she flies to any hight, let
her do so, hinder her not; if she
inclines to change her Thoughts,
to any other matter or object, do
not stop her Inclination; she may still
preserve the most excellent Tran-
quility of Mind, that can be by
simply reposing her Will, in a sincere
desire to see GOD, to wish nothing
but GOD, nor to relish any thing
but him alone.

Enure your Heart, by frequent
Exercise, to Interiour and Exteri-
our Sweetness, and keep it calm
among the Multiplicity of business
which present themselves. Give
not way, by any means, to be
burried,

buried, which is the Pest of all Devotion; keep your Soul continually *above*, so that she may have still the upper hand of all Sublunary Affairs, by not lending an Eye to this World, but to despise it, not to time it self otherwise, than to aspire by it to Eternity.

Practice your self frequently in the Submission of your Will to GOD's: And be ready to adore him as heartily when he sends you Afflictions, as when he Caresses you with Consolations. Behave your self sweetly and obligingly in all your Actions: For every one justly expects from you this good Example. 'Tis easy to guide a Bark when the Wind is still, and the Sea calm. Nor is it any Mastery to pass ones Life with Moderation, and Sweetness, when they are exempt from business; but 'tis difficult to keep our Conversation steady, and even in the midst of Tempests. Great care therefore is to be used how you manage all your Actions and Intentions in such occasions, so as to keep your Heart

Affable,

Affable, Just, Sweet, Humble and Generous.

Observe, I say, a Sweetness in your Demeanour. Do not give way to your Humours and your Inclinations; but, as both reason and Devotion require, be Kind and Humble towards all. Endeavour to frame your Spirit to Peaceableness, and Tranquility, and to stifle those bad propensions, which would warp your Soul, by practising carefully the contrary Virtues. Resolve to be particularly diligent and attentive in this Exercise. Four things I have to say to you on this occasion, which I would wish you to observe. All your harm comes from those Vices that you so dread. Love Virtue, and you will pursue it. Bring your mind by serious Consideration, to love the practice of Charitable Sweetness, and take Delight in exercising Humility. Do this, my dear Daughter, and you will be a Generous and Heroical Christian. But to do this well, you must often think of it, and lay it to Heart;

God

God will reward your Endeavours with a thousand Consolations. Raise then your heart often towards GOD, in whom your Eternal reward is stor'd up. If you be not esteem'd here, so much the better. Love that very Abjection, and your reward is secure. Believe me, GOD looks with a more favourable Eye upon those who are despis'd here ; and what's held most vile by the World, is most agreeable to him, and most precious in his Sight.

GOD is so good, that *he* visits us interiourly, when *we* are visited by Crosses and Contradictions ; and he will not fail to Strengthen and Establish you in Solid Humility, Simplicity, and Mortification. Live then as Joyful as is possible, with this Excellent Joy which Peace and Devotion bring along with them ; of which Joy, the Love of Abjection is the fruitful Root.

Let your Life be wholly woven of Humility, Sweetness, and passionate Affection, for your Heavenly Spouse ; and do not trouble your

your self at all that you cannot call to mind, or reflect on all your little Failings, to accuse your self of them in Confession. No, my Daughter, let not this trouble you ; for as you fall often into such Imperfections without being aware of them ; so you often raise your self again when you do not at all perceive it, nor reflect on it.

But take heed of Hurry and Precipitancy : It will writh the thread you are spinning into knots, and and Ravel all your Work. Let us still continue going forwards, tho' we advance never so slowly, we shall gain much Ground. Be not afflicted, if God seems to leave you in the mid way for his greater Glory and your greater Profit. 'Tis his will that our misery should be the Throne of his Mercy, and our weakness, the seat of his Omnipotence.

Once more, I say, Love your Abjection. But you will say my Understanding is utterly Dark and Unable to do any Good. Very well ; 'tis so : But if you continue Humble, Calm, Sweet humour'd, and

and Confident in GOD amidst this Obscurity, if you give no way to Impatience, nor hurry your self thro' an Imprudent hait, if you be not at all distract'd at this Obscurity, but, (I do not say Joyfully, but) Heartily, Frankly, and Firmly, embrace his Cross, and remain in this gloomy Darkness, you will by this means gain this precious Love of Abjection; for to be Spiritually abject, is nothing else, but to be thus Dark, Blind, and Impotent. Love your self as such, for his Love, who will'd you should be such, and then you will love your own Abjection; which is the most Efficacious means to gain this Tranquility of Heart.

C H A P. XXIV.

Of *Holy Obedience.*

OU R Saviour said to St. Peter, when thou wast Young, thou didst gird thy self, and walkest whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalst come to be Old, thou shall stretch forth thy Hand, and another shall bind thee.

They are yet young Learners, and Novices in the Love of God, who use to *gird themselves*; they make choice of such Mortifications as best delight them; they, at their pleasure, pitch upon such and such Penances, Resignations and Devotions, and mingle the doing their own Will, with doing the Will of GOD. But the Veteran and Old Masters in Spiritually, suffer themselves to be bound, and girded by others, and submit to the Yoak, which they lay upon them, and force themselves to go into such ways, as are contrary to their Inclination; they (in some sort) voluntarily

voluntarily suffer themselves to be governed against their Will; saying within themselves, *Obedience is better than Sacrifice.* By which we see, in how high a manner they Glorify GOD, by not only Crucifying their Flesh, but even their Spirit.

Keep then your Heart open, free, and strongly bent to perform exactly what your Superiour shall impose upon you; for after the measure that (by Virtue of Holy Obedience) you shall undertake any thing for GOD's sake, he will second you, and help to do your business with you, if you have but a Will to do this with Him: For his only business is to Sanctify and perfect your Souls.

Let this be your grand Employ; and do it Humbly, Simply, and Confidently. Do this, I say, and you can never receive any Distraction that can do you harm. That Peace is not as it ought to be which refuses any Labour, or Trouble, which tends to Glorify GOD's Name.

You are in a great Error, my Daughter, if you think that any thing will bring you to perfection without *Obedience*, which is the dearly esteem'd Virtue of GOD, your Heavenly Spouse ; in which, by which, and for which, he was pleas'd to Die on the Cross. Many Religious Persons, and others too, have become Saints without mental Prayer; but none did ever arrive at that Dignity, without *Obedience*.

True, you ought to love Prayer, but yet you ought not to love it, but only for the Love you bear to GOD: Wherefore, he that thus Loves it, Loves no more of it, than it pleases GOD to give him; and GOD wills not to give him more than Obedience permits. Reduce then your heart to the Pliableness of a little Infant ; let your Will be waxen-natur'd, apt to receive any Impression, and your Spirit naked and stript of any kind of Affection, save only to love GOD. As for the means to procure this Love, let them be indifferent to you.

Happy

Happy you, if you live your whole Life meekly and holily amongst the greatest pains for the Love of GOD.

CHAP. XXV.

Of Submission.

If you do not become as little Infants, you can have no part in the Kingdom of GOD. How great a good is it, my Daughter, to be Pliable, and Facil ; and dispos'd to bend gently, and without force and Reluctance, to every occasion ! The Saints have taught us this Submission of our Will by their Practice ; but our Saviour has inculcated it to us both by his Word and Example.

What is the Evangelical Coun-
sel of Abnegation of our selves,
but to renounce in every occasion
our proper Will and proper Judg-
ment, to follow the Will of another,
and to submit our selves in
all things ; excepting nevertheless,

such as offend GOD, and are against his Holy Law ? But you will say, I see evidently, that this which I am will'd to do, proceeds from a *Human* Will, and a *Natural* Inclination ; and therefore GOD has not inspir'd my Mother, Superiour, nor my Sisters to make me do these things. Perhaps he has not ; but notwithstanding, he has most certainly order'd you to perform what they enjoyn you ; and if you refuse to do it, you violate and break your Holy purpose, to obey GOD's will in all things ; and by consequence, you neglect the care you ought to have of Living up to a State of Perfection. Wherefore to perform the will of GOD, you must always submit your Will to do what they order, so it be not contrary to the Will of GOD, signify'd to you in his holy Commandments.

But to add one word more concerning the Will of Creatures ; it may be understood after three manners ; by manner of Affliction, by way of Complaisance, or else when

it is to no particular purpose at all, as far as we know.

As for the first, you ought to be very steady to follow such Wills as are contrary to yours, were there no other reason but because our Will cannot endure to be contradicted ; and in this regard you ought to Labour earnestly in practising to follow the Will's of others, which generally are opposite to your own.

You ought therefore to undergo this Mortification of following the Wills of others, as an occasion of suffering some Affliction for GOD's sake ; and to make your best use of such daily Contradictions, to strengthen your Spirit in *Humility*, by accepting them clamly and sweetly.

As for the manner of *Complaint*, there needs no exhortation to perswade us to follow the Wills of others in such occasions ; for we are apt enough of our own accord to be Obedient in such things as are Agreeable to us ; rather in such occasions we prevent their

Wills by frankly offering our Submissions. 'Tis not then of the sort of Will that Submission is required, there being *Here* no doubt of our Compliance; 'Tis then the third sort of Wills which besides our Intention, and of which we cannot comprehend, or guess the reason, why they should require this Submission of us. And this is that, which gives us spiritual advantage. You will say why, or for what reason, should I rather do my Sister's will than my own? Is not my Will in this slight occurrence, as conformable to GOD's will as hers? Upon what ground ought I to judge that what he bids me do, is the Will of Heaven, rather than the Will I have to do otherwise? Ah! my dear Sister, 'tis true, 'tis in this occasion that the Divine Majesty will have us earn the Reward of our Submission; for if we see that another has Power to Command us, or that she intreats us to do such or such a thing, it can never be much meritorious to do it; nor do we in doing

ing it, overcome any great natural Repugnance, because our own Propension sways our Will to accomplish it ; but, when the reasons are hid from us ; then, then it is, that our Will repugns, our Judgment flies off, and we resent the Opposition. 'Tis in these occasions we must excell our selves, get the upper hand of our selfish Nature, and with the Simplicity of an Infant, or Innocent Child, do what others will us to do, without expecting Discourses or Reasons, and say within our selves ; I know 'tis the Will of GOD, that I should rather do my Neighbours Will than my own ; and therefore I set my self to do it, without troubling my self to reflect whether it be the Will of GOD, that I should submit my self to do what (perhaps) may proceed from Passion, or Natural Inclination, or perhaps from some good Intention, or some Rational Motive. For in such petty concerns as these, the best way is to walk Simply. What a folly would it appear to stand meditating an hour to know whe-

ther 'tis the Will of God, whether I should do this or the other, in things of such slight Importance, that they are not worth considering? Especially when I see I shall give some content to my Neighbour, in doing what he desires? Even in things of Consequence we shou'd not lose time in considering them; but apply to our Superiours to know what we ought to do, and this done, think no more of them, but rest absolutely upon their Judg-
ment whom GOD has given us to conduct our Souls in the Perfection of his Holy Love.

But, if we ought thus to condescend to the Wills of every ordinary person, much more ought we to comply with the Wills of our Superiours, whom we ought to look upon as those, who bear GOD's Place. Whence, tho' we do not know them exempt from natural Inclinations, and even from some Passions; and that out of some Emotion of those Passions they sometimes commanded, or reprehended their Inferiours, yet we are not to wonder

wonder at it: For they are made of the same corrupt Mould as other Men are, and consequently are subject to have their Inclinations, and Passions. Yet, for all that, we are not at Liberty to Judge, that what they command us springs from that Byass. Nay, tho' we knew certainly it did so, yet we ought not refuse to obey them with all the Submission imaginable, and this sweetly and cordially, and to subject our selves to their Correction. I know 'tis something hard, and against the Grain of our Self-Love, to be obnoxious to those ill-relishing accidents; but 'tis not the Satisfaction of this sort of Love that we ought to regard in such occurrences; but only the holy Love of our dear *Jesus*; who requires of all his beloved Spouses, that they imitate his perfect Obedience; who not only rendered himself up intirely to the Will of his Heavenly Father, but also to the Will of his Parents here on Earth; nay more, of his very Enemies; who no doubt follow'd the rude impulse of their Passions.

Passions, in laying such Torments upon his Innocency ; yet, notwithstanding our Blessed *Jesus* submitted himself to all their Fury sweetly, calmly, and meekly. By which we see that his Command to us of taking up his Cross and following him, ought to be thus understood ; that we must welcome all Contradictions which assault us in every occurrence whatever, by the Vertue of Holy Obedience ; whether they be great ones, or of never so little weight or Importance.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the Holy Simplicity, with which we ought to leave our selves to the Conduct of others.

YOU desire, my dear Daughter, to be inform'd, in what consists the *Simplicity* by which we learn the Conduct of our Interior, both to GOD, and to those he has set over us.

There

There are some Souls who pretend they will not resign the Conduct of their Soul to any but only to the Spirit of GOD, and they take a Conceit, that all that their Imagination represents to them lively, is the Inspiration or Motion of the Holy Ghost, which takes them by the hand, and leads them like little Children ; which is most certainly a great Illusion. For was there ever a more particular Vocation than that of St. *Paul*, in which our Saviour spoke himself to convert him ? Yet, nevertheless, he did not think fit to instruct him himself, but sent him to *Ananias*.

The conduct by which GOD guides us, is only that of *Obedience*. If you take not that Road, there is nothing but Errour and Wandering. True, we are not all of us led by the same way ; but 'tis true withal, that every particular Man, does not know the way which is proper for him, or by which GOD intends to lead him. This is a knowledge reserved to our *Superiors*, to whom therefore GOD gives

gives light how to direct those under their charge. You are not permitted to alledge, that they are not well acquainted with our manner of Spirit; but to believe firmly, that our Obedience and Submission, are the certain marks of a true Inspiration, altho' it shou'd happen that we have no Comfort in the Exercise they enjoyn us, and find more content in others. For our own Content and Satisfaction is not the Test, by which we are to judge of the Goodness of our Actions. To be addicted only to our own Satisfaction, is the same, as to be fond of *Flowers*, and neglect the *Fruit*. You will gain more Spiritual Profit by that which you do by the direction of your Superiours, than by following those kind of interiour Instincts, which generally have no better Origin than our own Self-Love; which under the colour of Goodness, makes us affect our own Complaisance, and foment in us a vain esteem of our selves.

'Tis a great truth, that all your Good depends upon your suffering your self to be led, and govern'd by the Spirit of GOD, and this without any reserve; and 'tis this very thing which true Simplicity, recommended to you by our Lord, pretends to bring to effect. Be simple or *Innocent as Doves*, says he to his Apostles. But he stops not here; but tells them moreover, that if they do not become as Simple as *Little Children*, they cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. An Infant, while it is little, is such a Pattern of true Simplicity, that it knows nothing but what its Mother tells it; it has no other Love but for its Mother; and by the means of this Love, but one only Pretension, which is to be still in its Mothers Lap; and being once repos'd in that beloved Place, 'tis fully satisfy'd, and seeks no further.

The Soul which has attained to perfect Simplicity, has no Love but for GOD; and in loving him, no other pretension but to repose her self

self in the Breast of her Heavenly Father, and, like a loving Infant, there to abide forever; leaving all the care of her self, entirely to his Fatherly Goodness, troubling her self no farther about any other concern, but to preserve her self in this Holy Confidence and Dependance on him; Nay, she is not solicitously troubled to acquire even those Virtues and Favours, which seem to be necessary. 'Tis true indeed, that she neglects no duty that comes in her way; but 'tis also true, that she does not hurry or force her self to gain Perfection by any other means which are prescrib'd her.

And indeed, to what end should any be desirous of those Virtues, which do not come in our Circumstances to practice? Sweetness in Conversation, Love of our Abjection, Humility, tender Charity, and Cordial Love of our Neighbour, together with Obedience, are the Virtues, the Practice of which belongs to the whole Community, and are necessary for it; frequent occasions

casions of exercising them, still presenting themselves to those who live in our Condition. As for Constancy, Magnificence, and such other Virtues that lie out of our Road, let us not trouble our selves about them. We shall not be one jot less Magnificent, and Generous Spiritually, tho' we neglect them.

You will ask me how thole who are addicted to Prayer, to this Holy Simplicity, and this casting themselves entirely upon GOD, are to govern themselves in all their Actions? I answer, that not only in Prayer, but in the Conduct of their whole Lives, they ought to walk on stedfastly in this Spirit of Simplicity; abandoning and remitting all their Actions, and the Success of them, to the good pleasure of GOD; leaving themselves by a Love, accompanied with a perfect and entire Confidence, to the mercy, and the care of that Eternal Love, which the Divine Providence has for them; and to this End, let them persist firmly in this course, without giving way to stand reflecting.

fecting on themselves, as to what they do, or whether they are satisfy'd or no with their Actions. Alas ! It is not our Contentment or Satisfaction, which makes us Satisfactory in GOD's sight ; rather they only serve to content this wretched Love and Solitude we have for our selves, without reference to GOD. Those little Infants, whom our Lord has chosen out for the Modell of our Perfection, are not anxiously afraid of every thing they do in the Presence of their Fathers or Mothers. They keep close to them without reflecting on the Satisfaction or Comfort, which they take in them ; tho' they do in good earnest, and after their simple manner, enjoy a high content without curiously enquiring why or how it comes. Their Love so takes up their whole Thought, that they can attend to nothing else.

He who bends his care affectionately to please his Heavenly Lover, has neither Will, nor Leasure to look back upon *himself* ; because he continually strains his steps forwards

wards towards that quarter his Love carries him.

This exercise of giving up himself continually unto the hands of GOD, does in an excellent manner comprise all the perfection of the other exercises belonging to a most perfect Simplicity and Purity of heart; and, as long as he pleases to continue us in this Imployment, we ought not to change it

Those Spiritual Lovers, and Spouses of the King of Heaven, do take an exact view of themselves from time to time, as the Doves do who are near the Christial Waters; to see if they be drest up in such a manner as to please their Lover. This is perform'd by the Examine of their Consciences, by which they Trim up, Purify, and Adorn their Soul, after the most curious Garb they are able; not with an Intention to make themselves Perfect, or to satisfy their own Fancy, nor yet for the desire they have to make a great Progress in Virtue, but purely to *obey* their Spouse out of the respect they bear him, and for the extream

extream desire they have of giving him Content. And, can there be a Love more excellently pure, more clean, and more simple, and unmingled with any other Consideration whatever than this is? Since they do not purify themselves that *themselves* may be Pure; nor dress themselves, that *themselves* may be Beautifull; but aim meerly, and solely to please their Lover; to whom, if a negligent, and less handsome Garb were more agreeable, they would effect it full as much, as they do the most charming and most beautiful Mode that can be. Observe how the simple and undesigning Doves do not employ much care, nor any long time, nor any Study or haist to watch and trick up themselves; because the Confidence which their Love gives them, makes them rely on the Love and Kindness of their Lover, and that they will be heartily loved by him; which takes from them all over-busy and distrustful care that they are not handsome enough. Besides that, the greater

greater desire they have to Love, then to dress up and prepare themselves for Love, cuts off all curious sollicitude, and makes them content themselves with a Sweet and Amorous preparation to Love their Lover Entirely and Cordially.

Cast entirely all your whole Heart, all your Pretensions, all your Solitude, and all your Affections on the Fatherly Bosome of GOD; and he will Conduct and bring them whither his Love sees best. Let us hear and imitate our Divine Saviour, as the Devout Psalmist represents the Soveraign Efforts of his Love on the Tree of the Cross, which he concludes in these words. *My Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit: After we have said this, my dear Daughter, what remains more but to Expire and Die on the Cross, by a Death caus'd by Love; no more living to our selves, but desiring that Jesus Christ may live in us.* This once happily atchiev'd, immediately all the Disquiets of our Heart, which Self-Love, and the over tender

tender regard we have for ou
selves suggests, will Die too. 'Tis
these which secretly prompt us
to run hastily in quest of our own
Satisfactions, and our own proper
Perfections. When we are emfor
barkt in the Exercises of our Vo
cation, and carry'd on with a fau
vourable Gale of this Simple, and
Loving Confidence in GOD, whether
shall make a great progress with
out perceiving that we stir; we
shall advance, without giving
our selves the trouble of Walking
and we shall rid much Ground, tho
we seem not to stir from our place
like those who sail smoothly in the
open Sea with a propitious Wind.

When the Soul is arriv'd to the
this happy State, then all Chances
and variety of Accidents which
happen to us, are received sweetly
and contentedly. For what can Arr
shock, or disturb a Soul which is in
settled in GOD's hand, which re
poses it self in his Bosome, which
is wholly given over, and dedica
ted to his Love, and perfectly re
sign'd to his good Pleasure?

Certainly

our Certainly, such a Soul in all occ-
Turences will, without speculating
upon their Causes, heartily Repeat
and pronounce that holy Acquie-
pence of our Saviour : *Yes Father,*
asm for so it seem'd good in your Eyes.

Vo. Before we leave this Point, let
fals add a word concerning Pru-
andence, seeing our Saviour has joyn'd
w them together when he said ; *Be
ith Prudent as Serpents, and Simple as
we Doves.* This Virtue of *Prudence*
ing must not be neglected in our pra-
ctice, it being as it were a *Spiri-
tual Salt*, which gives *Taste* and
ce *Savour* to all the other Virtues.
th But yet it ought to be so practis'd
d. by those who are Religious, that
t the Virtue of a Simple Confidence
ces in *GOD*, do still keep the upper
nich hand ; for 'tis only *this* that can
eth make them continue repos'd in the
can *Arms* of their *Heavenly Father*, and
n in the protection of the *B. Virgin*
re their *Patroness* and dearest Mo-
nich ther, or hope firmly for her *Pra-
ayers* and *Intercession* for them,
re to her *Adorable Son* : Which they
may, if thus disposed, be assur'd
nly of

of, since they are assembled in a, it
Community for the Glory of God a
and for her Honour.

CHAP. XXIX.

Of Religious Simplicity.

SImplicity is nothing but an Act of Pure Charity that regards only one End, which is to acquire in a perfect manner the Love of God: And our Soul is then arrived to this Simplicity, when we have no other Pretension, or Designs in all we do but *that*. 'Tis an Act of refin'd and unmixt Charity. 'Tis that *Unum Necessarium*, that *Only one necessary* thing recommended by our Saviour. Lastly, 'tis an inseparable Companion of Charity, since it aims directly at GOD, and is inconsistent with any mixture of Self-Interest, for in that case, it were rather to be call'd *Duplicity*, which squints two ways, then *Simplicity*, which confines and rivets its whole view at one only; that is

in a, it so regards GOD, that it lends
God a Glance to any Creature.

Simplicity does quite banish out
of the Soul, that Care and Solici-
tude, with which many perplex
themselves unprofitably, in seeking
out a great number of Exercises,
and (as they call them) *Means*
how they may come to Love GOD;
And they take a Conceit that, unless
they do all that the former Saints
have done, they can never think
of they have done enough to obtain
it. Poor Soals ! They torment
themselves to find out a kind of
Art how to come at the Love of
GOD, and do not consider that
there is no such *Art* of Loving
Him, but merely to Love Him; they
imagin that there is a kind of my-
sterious Method of gaining this
Love, when plain and artless Sim-
plicity does the whole business
alone.

After a Soul endowed with Sim-
plicity has done any Action, which
she judges 'tis her Duty to do, she
thinks no more of it ; and if it slip
into her Thoughts what others
F will

will say or think of her, she endeavours to break that Thought off in the middle, and stop the Progress of it, because she cannot endure any thing should wave aside or warp her Intention, which is to keep an attentive Eye to her GOD, and to encrease the Love of him in her Will. The Consideration of Creatures, are the least part of her Motive, because she reserves all to her Creatour. If she sees it expedient to do this or that, she sets about it, let what GOD pleases succeed of it. Having once done her duty, all her care is over; yet, notwithstanding all this, she may perhaps feel some kind of trouble, but let her not fear it, nor regard it. 'Tis only in the Inferiour part of her Soul, nor ought it to shock us, as long as we do not deliberately consent to the Suggestion.

The Soul endow'd with this Virtuous and Wise Simplicity, concerns not her self with what others do, or will do. She thinks only of what becomes her; nor does she spend

spend, even on the doing her Duty, more Thoughts than are necessary. As for other Persons, or other Matters, she quickly turns her Thoughts from *them*, for they are none of *her* business. This Virtue has a meer Affinity with Humility, which does not permit us to have an ill opinion of any but of our selves.

You will ask how, we are to observe this Holy Simplicity in our Conversation, and Recreations. I answer in the same manner, as in all our other Actions: Only in *these*, we must use a Holy Freedom and Liberty, in entertaining our selves in such Subjects, as are proper for the Season and Genius of Joy and Recreation. You must strive to be very genuine and unaffected in your Conversation, and yet not inconsiderate or too eager; in regard that Simplicity still follows the same Rule that the Love of GOD does. And tho' you happen to say some little thing, which seems not to be so well receiv'd by all, as you would wish,

you must not trouble your self to stand poising, or reflecting upon every word: No, by no means; for 'tis certainly Self Love, which puts you upon critical niceties and considering, whether what we say or do does not offend, but is well receiv'd. Holy Simplicity do's not roam after its words and Actions, with that scrupulous care; but leaves the Success of them to Divine Providence, to which it is most highly, and indissolubly attacht. It neither turns to the right, nor the left, but marches in a direct Path right forwards. Only, if it meets in its way any opportunity of exercising any Virtue, it is careful not to let slip that occasion, it being one of the proper means to arrive at Pefection, that is, at the Love of GOD; but yet it does not hurry it self, or run out of the way to seek for such occasions, but layes hold of them, when they are presented. Nor yet does it despise or disdain any thing, nor trouble her self about any thing, but remains Quiet and Peaceable; resting

resting assur'd, that GOD knows the bottom of our Heart, and her true desire to please him, which is all such a Soul cares for. But how can we make two things that seem so contrary hang together ? On the one side, we are told we must still have a great *Care* of our Perfection and Advancement in Virtue ; and on the other, that we must not think of it. I answer, you are not forbid to *think* of it ; but not to *think* of it with hurry and *disquiet*.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the manner to receive Corrections.

Y

OU desire to know, my Daughter, how you ought to receive Corrections in the best manner, without having any Sentiment, or Sense of them ; or any Dryness of Spirit, while they are inflicted on you. To keep your self from having any Sense of them is impossible ; such Motions are necessary and natural. Happy should we be if

we could have this sort of Perfection for one quarter of an hour before we die. But what's to be done at that Season to keep our Spirit *Calm* and *Quiet*? You are to *cling* close to our Lord ; to *reject* as well as you can this Sentiment, by speaking and addressing to our Lord about some other Subject. But, you will say, the Sense of your Pains is not *appeas'd* by doing so, rather it forces you to consider the harm they do you. Alas ! That is not a fit time to submit your Judgment so, as to make you believe and acknowledge, that your Correction is good and convenient for you ; No, this is to be done when your Soul is calm'd, and *appeas'd*, Firm and Resolute not to consent to the Passion you feel, or second its Suggestions in your Words or Actions, tho' the reasons seem never so good on your side; for, at that penal season, we shall never want reasons, rather they will present themselves by heaps. But you are to give no Credence to any of them, how excellent and evident so ever they seem. Keep your Spirit

Spirit up close to GOD (as was said) diverting your Thought after you are humbled ; submissively applying to the Divine Majesty, and speaking with him of another different matter. Mark well what I here recommend to you, I repeat it here because of the great Profit it will bring you. Humble your self with a sweet and peaceable Humility, and not with a Humility, that is Angry and Chagrine. For such is our Misfortune, that we oftentimes offer to God Acts of a fretfull and vext Humility. Such Acts are fruitless, nor do they ever calm our Spirits. Let us then on the contrary, make those Acts before the Divine Goodness, with a loving and sweet Confidence in Him. If we do thus, we shall find our Souls reduced to their former Tranquility, and we shall dis-avow and reject very easily all those reasons, (for they are generally most unreasonable) which our proper Judgment and Self-love suggested ; and shall apply our selves with the same Affability to converse with those

those who gave us this Correction, or were the cause of our Vexatious Pain, as we did formerly.

You'll say ; you could overcome your self so far, as to speak to those Persons who inflict this Correction ; but, if they do not answer you civilly and agreeably, it redoubles and reinforces the Temptation. All this springs from the same mischievous root now spoken of. What is it to you, or what are you the worse, whether people speak to you on one manner, or another, so you stand firm in doing your Duty, and bearing your self as becomes you ? All accounts cast up, there is no Person (not even the Saints themselves) who has not an aversion to Correction ; yet still their Virtue consisted in this, that they did nothing in favour of the Sentiment they had of their Pain, nor were transported by it, to any indecent Word or Action ; but they made their Advantage of it, by recovering their Prayer better, and abandoning themselves to Mortification.

But

But you will say, that you submit with all your Heart to the Correction, as Just and Reasonable; but yet it gives you great Confusion and Trouble, to think that you have given occasion to your Superior to be angry; whence you cannot approach to her with the same Confidence as formerly, tho' you love the Abnegation, which proceeds from your fault. Even this too, my Daughter, proceeds from the Suggestion of Self love. You consider not, that you have a kind of Convent within your self, of which Self love is the Superior, and as such, it imposes Penances; and this Pain you now complain of, is the Penance it puts on you, for your having offended the Superior; for which perhaps she will not esteem you so much as she would have done, if you had not sinned. What is to be done in this Case? Humble your self, and have Patience.

C H A P. XXIX.

Concerning Aversions.

Aversions are certain Disinclinations, which sometimes are Natural, and give us a certain Loathing or Dislike of some other Persons, so that we do not love their Conversation. I mean that we have not the same Content in their Company, as we have in that of others for whom we have a sensible Affection, by reason of a kind of Alliance, and Agreeableness between their humour and ours.

When I find this Aversion prompting me to avoid their Conversation, whom I know to be Persons of great Virtue, by which I might reap much Profit, I ought not to give way to my Aversion so as to shun their Company; but I must strive to make it submit to reason so as either voluntarily to seek after or at least admit Quietly and Contentedly their Conversation when I happen to meet them.

But

But how shall we remedy these Aversions, since perhaps there are not any so perfect, that they are exempt from them. Those who are of a rougher Nature dislike those of a sweet and very obliging Humour, and esteem them too easy and mean, even tho' this kind of Genius is generally the most amiable Quality that can be. The only remedy of this evil (and the same may be said of all other Temptations) is to divert our Thoughts from thinking of that Honour of theirs, to which we have an Aversion. But our Mischief is, that we will needs set our selves to speculate, whether we have reason or no for our particular Aversion to such a Person. But, by no means ought we to give way to such a research; for our Self-Love, which never sleeps, will so gild the Ill, that we shall easily believe it is good; I mean it will persuade us that we have reasons, which seem to us good ones; and when these have past the Examination of our proper Judgment and Self-love,

we are easily reduced to think them very reasonable. Great care is to be had in this occasion; and therefore it being of Importance, I will a little more enlarge upon it.

I say then, that we have never any reason at all for this Aversion, much less ought we to foment and nourish it, by going along with it. Wherefore, when those Aversions are Natural, the best way is to divest your Thoughts from heading them; by which means we may cozen our Nature, from breaking out into actual Disgusts. But if that will not do, we must proceed furthur; we must Fight them, and Conquer them; when once we perceive that they pretend to Violate the Subjection, which we owe to our Reason (whose dictates will never suffer us to do any thing in favour of these Aversions) in the same manner, as we combat our bad Inclinations, lest they bring us to offend GOD. Indeed, when we second them no farther, than barely to speak less kindly to the disagreeable

able Person, than we would to others whom we much affect, 'tis no such heinous matter. Perhaps it is scarce in our Power to do otherwise, when we are actually sollicited by this ill-humour'd Passion; nor do I judge this will be requir'd of us.

CHAP. XXX.

Of Conversation.

AS for your Conversation, let it be your Care it be always Equal, Sweet, and Kind. This will repress the Sallies of your Nature, when they are too brisk and earnest. Above all, be Humble, and sugredly Sweet in your Carriage; strive to advantage your self by Sufferings; accepting them affectionately for his dear Love who suffered so much for us.

While you are performing your daily Duties, take heed your Love be not so much engaged in any thing, that it be not put out of its right

right course; and be sure to keep fast hold still of the hand of our Lord. If you find your self too much entangled and troubled, the first thing you do, reduce your Spirit to Calmness, and represent to your self the Mother of GOD, and how sweetly she was employed, while she wrought with one of her Hands and Arms, and held her Infant *Jesus* in the other.

In the time of Peace and Tranquility, enure your Soul to this Sweetness by multiply'd Acts; for, by this means you will tame the ungovernable, and untractable wildness of your Spirit, and reduce it to meekness.

You must labour also to acquire Sweetness of Heart towards your Neighbour; looking on him as on the work of GOD's own hand, who by the same Goodness, is made to enjoy the same Celestial Joy and Happiness which is prepar'd for us. Besides, those whom our Lord bears with, we ought to bear with also tenderly, and to suffer their

Spiritual

Spiritual InfirmitieS with a kind Compassion.

You must hold very firmly to the Cross of our Lord, that you may walk securely amongst those Crouds of Dangers, with which you must expect to be assaulted, in the various Conversations and Rencounters, which you are to meet with and pass through. You must keep your self ballance every motion you make, with th^d Counterpoise of his Divine Will, to whom you have vow'd your Body and your Heart. Look carefully to that Heart, for which the Heart of GOD himself was sad even to Death ; Mortify it in its excessive and vain Joys, and rejoice and cheer it up in its Mortifications. Walk on still Couragiouſly from Virtue to Virtue, till you have attain'd the ſovereign height of Divine Love ; which yet, you will never compass in this Life, because this ſacred Virtue will never receive any ſtint, any more, than does its Object, which is the Divine Goodneſſ.

I say, you must persist firm and immutable in two precious Virtues; the sweetest Charity towards our Neighbour, and the most amiable, and that is the most profound Humility towards GOD: And I hope you will fail in neither, but that our great GOD who has taken you by the hand to lead you to himself, will not leave you till he has lodg'd you in his Tabernacle.

Tear out of your Heart from the very Root, all desire of Preference and Precedency. 'Tis impossible you should ever gain so great Honour as in *despising* it, for this sets you *above it*. When Honour comes once to give your Heart a real trouble, both this sweetness of Charity and your Humility are in a safe Port. My dear Daughter, observe well the Precept of the Saints; who have all of them, admonisht those who would be perfect, to speak either little, or not at all of themselves, or what belongeth to themselves. Go on then in this track, and your Peace will be confirmed to you; when

the

the Lute is out of Tune, you must neither throw it by, nor break the strings; but lay your ear to it gently and attentively, to know where that fault lies, and softly stretch or slacken the string, as Art shall instruct you.

Sprinkle all the parts of your Conversation with *Sincerity*, and *Cheerfulness* both interiour and exteriour; not omitting sweetness of Charity, especially towards your dear Sisters, with whom the hand of Providence has associated you, and bound you to them by a Heavenly Tie; Support them, Love them, Caress them, and put them in your Bosome as your dearest Friends.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXXI.

Of Sweetness, or Pliableness of Spirit.

It is worth your while to make oft a particular exercise of Sweetness, and Acquiescence to the Divine Will; and this not always in great and extraordinary matters, but generally, for small and ordinary trifles: Prepare your self for this Exercise in the Morning, after Dinner, and after Vespers. But do this with a glad and cheerfull Heart. If some failings should happen, humble your self for them, and begin again with Courage.

Be very Affable and Courteous towards all, especially those who are of your own Order. Do nothing in hast, but go on calmly and sweetly, supporting one another, and keep your Spirit within it self, and in a due restraint. Alas ! Says King David, my Heart has forfaken me ; our Spirit will never leave us, if we do not leave it : Let us keep it still in our hands

as St. *Catharine of Sienna*, and St. *Dennis* advise us.

Do all that is ordered you quietly and prudently, and converse peaceably with all. Pursue those Actions, which you see may be done, with Love, and pass over these which cannot be done without contest. When one has to do with many Persons, 'tis to be expected your Spirit will be haunted with some Aversions and Repugnances. But you must look upon these as on so many occasions offered to Exercise true Virtue, and tender Charity. You are to do your Duty towards all lovingly, tho it goes never so much against the grain of your Nature.

Fix then your Heart every Morning, in the Posture of Humility, Sweetness, and Peaceableness. Do the same after Dinner and Vespers, and now and then in the other times of the Day. I doubt not, but you have often occasion to exercise the Love of being disregarded, and held an Abject, and good for nothing, and this in diverse occasions.

Lay

Lay hold greedily on these Rencounters to make your Advantage of them. 'Tis a main Point of Humility to welcome such occurrences, especially when you are to converse with those who are opposite to you.

Be never importunately curious and nice, with those who are of a different humour ; but continue Humble, Submissive, Sweet and Peaceable with them, and your Virtue will deserve to be esteem'd admirable. Those Humilities which are least discernable, are the most refin'd and most perfect. A continual evenness of humour, a constant sweetness of Spirit, is far more rare and excellent, than perfect Chastity ; and therefore 'tis a most desireable, and most amiable Virtue.

C H A P. XXXII

Of Modesty.

There are three sorts of *Modesty*, or Moderation in our Demeanour. The first, which particularly claims the title to that Name, does eminently excell the other two: And it consists in the decent Comportment of our Exterior, which is, for very many reasons, most highly to be commended. For, first it deserves our particular regard, because it renders us very subinissive to others. This is that which enhanuces its value; for that which does render us subject to others for GOD's sake, is of great Merit, and marvellously pleasing to his Divine Majesty.

The second reason is, because it makes us thus subject, not only in *some few* occasions, but in *all* times, and in *all* places, whether we be a lone or in company. I say at *all* times, even when we are sleeping. Good God! How Modestly and Devoutly should

Should we lay our selves down to rest, did we reflect that GOD's holy Eyes were then looking upon us ! We should doubtlesly lay our Arms across, over our Breast with the greatest Devotion. 'Tis *Modesty* then, that keeps us subject and respectfull in every circumstance of our Life, because the holy Angels, and our infinitely holy GOD himself are always present to us ; and 'tis for their seeing us, and for their sakes, that we behave our selves thus Modestly.

This Vertue is also as much to be recommended to us, because it edifies our Neighbour : Insomuch, that a simple Exteriour Modesty, has wrought the Conversion of many a Soul. 'Tis a kind of a silent Sermon : 'Tis a Vertue which St. Paul does in a particular manner recommend to us, saying, *Let your Modesty appear before all Men.* Modesty, casts a considerate Eye upon three things ; the Time, the Place, and the Person. For would not he who looks Grave, and would by no means laugh in the circum-

stances

stance of Recreation, and yet re-
strains not laughing in a serious
occasion, would not such a Man,
I say, look like an odd conceited
unseasonable Person? There are
Gestures and Countenances which
will beseem such a time, and yet
would very ill become another.
He that falls a laughing in a serious
occasion, and will not relax his
Mind with decent Mirth when the
Season is proper, would not he
justly be held Fantastick and Im-
modest? We must also observe the
Place and the *Persons* with whom
we converse, but very particularly
the *Quality* of those *Persons*.

The second sort of the Virtue of
Modesty is Interiour, and works
the same Effects in the Soul, as
this now spoken of does in the Body.
This keeps and maintains the
Powers of our Soul in Tranquility,
by avoiding the Curiosity and
needless Enquiries of our Under-
standing; and retrenching the Mu-
ltitude of the desires of our Will,
by bringing them to the sole ap-
plication of our Thoughts and
Affections

Affections to that *Unum Necessarium*, that *one Necessity Object* which *Mary* made choice of, and which shall never be taken from her; which is an affectionate Will to please *GOD*. Whereas *Mirth's* busy Spirit seems to represent to us very lively the Immodesty of the Will. For she runs hastily to and fro, and sets all her Servants a work, nor gives her self, or them any leisure to eat; so eager she is to treat our *Saviour* well, that she thinks she can never provide dishes enough to make him good *Chear*. Just so the Will which is not bridled by *Modesty*, runs from one Motive to another, to excite in her self the Love of *GOD*, and employs all its Care and Industry, to find means to serve him; whereas there is no need of all this bustle; it being much better to keep close to our *Lord*, as did *Mary Magdalen* kneeling at his Feet, and begging of him, to bestow upon us his holy Love; which is a more Compendious and more effectual way, than to stand thinking and study-

ing how we may acquire it. This *Modesty* keeps the Will shut up close, or retir'd within her self, and actually exercising the best means of advancing her self in the Love of *GOD*, according to that Vocation in which his Providence has plac'd her.

I have already told you, that this *Virtue* is chiefly employ'd in subduing and subjecting your *Understanding* ; because *Curiosity*, which is so natural to us, exposes us to very many *Dangers*, and hinders us from knowing any one thing perfectly well, and as we ought, by reason we do not allow our selves time enough to learn it, and acquaint our selves with it throughly.

The Bees have no abiding place where to rest while they have no King, but are continually hovering in the Air, or clustering now here now there. But as soon as they have got a *Sovereign*, they keep themselves throng'd round about him. In like manner, after our Souls have once chosen our Lord

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I have already told you, that this Virtue is chiefly employ'd in subduing and subjecting your Understanding ; because Curiosity, which is so natural to us, exposes us to very many Dangers, and hinders us from knowing any one thing perfectly well, and as we ought, by reason we do not allow our selves time enough to learn it, and acquaint our selves with it thoroughly.

The Bees have no abiding place where to rest while they have no King, but are continually hovering in the Air, or clustering now here now there. But as soon as they have got a Sovereign, they keep themselves throng'd round about him. In like manner, after our Souls have once chosen our Lord

for their only King and Sovereign, our Powers like those chaste little Birds, leave their disorderly wildness, and range themselves near him; nor ever leave their well chosen Station, unless it be to gather Honey, by the Exercises of Charity towards our Neighbour, which he has commanded us; which done, they presently and modestly return to their former place of repose, to manage and amass together the Honey of Holy and Amorous Conceptions and Affections, which his sacred Presence gives them; by which means they avoid that unsteady Inquisitiveness of the Understanding, which so distracts them, by their simple attention to GOD; and also that unactive stupidity and uneasiness of Spirit, by performing those Exercises, which Charity towards their Neighbour puts them upon in all due occasions.

'Tis moreover to be remark't, that this exterior Modesty now spoken of, conduces much to gain the interior one, and to settle the

the Tranquillity and Peace of the Soul. The proof of which is visible from all those holy Fathers that have been professedly much addicted to Prayer; for they did all of them, make account that the modest Posture they us'd, did much avail to that end, as kneeling with their Hands joyned, or their Arms across.

The third sort of *Modesty* has respect to our Words, and to our manner of *Conversing* with others. There are some words which seem immodest, were they spoken in any other season except in the time of Recreation; in which circumstance right reason allows, that we may give a little relaxation to our Spirit; and he who, at that season would neither speak himself, nor let others speak of any thing but of high and sublime Subjects, would appear awkwardly Immodest: In regard, *Modesty* (as was said) regards both *Times* *Places*, and *Persons*.

For Example, I read lately in *St. Pachomius* his *Life*, that as soon as he had enter'd into the *Wilderness*,

to live there as a Hermit, he was assaulted with great Temptations, and the wicked Angels did often appear to him in diverse manners. The Writer of his Life relates, how when he went one Day to cut some Wood, he saw great Troops of the Infernal Spirits come to fright him ; who ranging themselves all armed in order, as Souldiers do when they mount the Guard, cry'd out to one another, make place for the holy Man. *Pachomius* well aware that these were but tricks of the Devil, fell a laughing and said, you jeer me ; but yet I shall be a Holy Man if it pleases God. The Devil, seeing he could not entrap him by *serious* representations, determin'd to try what *Mirthfulness* would do. He ty'd than abundance of Cords to one single Leaf of a Tree, and set a great Multitude to pull these Cords with might and main, crying out, and sweating as if they were over wrought. The Saint lifting up his Eyes, and observing this ridiculous Foolery of the Devil, represented

to himself our Saviour Crucify'd on the Tree of the Cross. The Devils seeing him apply his thought to the Fruit of the Redeeming Tree, and not to his fantastick Leaf, left him and went away with Confusion and Shame. There is a time to laugh, and a time to look soberly; as well as there is to speak, and be silent; as *Elias* mockt and laught at the Priests of *Baal*.

This sort of Modesty does also frame our manner of speaking, that it may be agreeable and not offensive to our Neighbour, either by being too mincingly low, or too rudely high; too drawlingly slow, or too hastily quick; but keeping a due and holy mean between those Extreams: Giving others also leave to finish what they are speaking of, without interrupting them (which bewrays an itch of Babbling) and yet, notwithstanding, take their own turn of speaking, as occasion invites, to avoid the opinion of Rusticity and Ill-breeding, or if Insufficiency, which renders us unfit for good

Conversation. Oftentimes also we
meet with occasions, in which
seems in some regard needful and
discourse much, and yet we m^elf
say little or nothing; because If the
desty, Tranquility, and Patiemt it
do require it of us that we sh^oo p
not affect to speak, but keep our S
thoughts to our selves.

CHAP. XXXIII.

The Exercise of stripping the S^{pe}c^ol^on^g naked from all her Affection^on^s

First Point. C^ontinue unchan^ging^lly in this How^l
Resolution that you ought still qui
keep your self in the simple presen^{ce} to
of GOD, by an intire strippi^{ng} your self of all self-love, and in
mitting your self intirely into the
arms of his Blessed Will; and, pl
oft as you find your Spirit wand^{er}te
from this Habitation in GOD, H
duce it calmly and sweetly to hi
former state; but yet without si
bile acts of your Understan^{di}n^g

Also your Will ; because this simple
and sincere Confidence in GOD,
and this hearty delivering your
self over into the fatherly Bosome
of the Divine Goodness, comprises
it self, all that can be requisite
please GOD.

Second Point. Continue thus, I
say, without diverting your self
considering what you are do-
ing, what you shall do, or what may
or will happen to you in all man-
ner of occurrences. Do not stand
Speculating upon your Contradicti-
ons or Afflictions, but receive them
all contentedly from the hand of
God without Exception, and this
with Sweetness and Patience ; ac-
quiescing totally, and in every thing
to his most Adorable Will. If you
perceive any Care or Desire arise
in your Heart, cast it away as
soon as it begins to appear, and re-
place your Heart on GOD ; pro-
testing that you desire nothing but
Him, and the accomplishment of
his most Blessed Pleasure.

Point third. Keep your Soul then in a holy Solitude and Retiredness accompany'd only with Christ Crucify'd. Reduce your self to the amiable Pureness and Nakedness of a little Infant, that your most loving and kind Lord may take you in his Arms, and carry you to the highest Perfection of his Divine Love, by such ways as he sees best. Be not discourag'd if he sometimes takes from you, or strips you naked even of divine Consolations and Perceptions of his presence ; for he does it for this end, that the consideration even of his presence here should not take up your Heart, but only himself and his divine Pleasure.

Fourth Point. O how happy are they who are thus *Naked*, for our Lord will cloath them again ! How happy are they who devest themselves of an immoderate and over earnest Solicitude, even to acquire the Love of GOD, and who have often in their thought these words, I came naked from the Womb of my Mother, and naked

naked I shall return thither! How happy was that Chaste and Holy Joseph, who had neither button nor loop to fasten his Garment; so that, when the *Egyptian* Lady would have caught him by that hold, he quickly disentangled himself, and escapt away from her.

Fifth Point. Admire the holy Spouse in the *Canticles*, who held it a great happiness to be naked of all Company, that she might be alone with her only King, and say to him, *My beloved is for me, and I am for him.* Consider the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, going to *Ægypt*, they saw none in their Journey, nor regarded any but their Blessed Jesus. Consider how, in the Close of the Transfiguration, the Disciples neither saw Moses nor Elias, but only Jesus. I admire with much Content, the Saviour of our Souls coming naked from the Womb and the Bosome of his Blessed Mother, and dying naked on the Cross, and afterwards embraced all naked by her, and afterwards Bury'd. I admire the

same Holy Virgin, who born naked of her Mother, and in the Eye of the World, depriv'd of the Honour of being a Mother her self, was afterwards devested of her Motherhood at the foot of the Cross, when he gave her to St. John for his. So that she might truly say, I was naked and stripped of my greatest happiness, before that instant when I conceived my Son, and I am now naked and devested of the Honour of being a Mother, when I receive him dead in my Arms. My Lord gave him to me, the Lord has taken him away. Blessed be the name of the Lord, Live my dear *Jesus*, despoil'd and stript of both Father and Mother upon the Cross; live in my Heart his holy Nakedness. I may say to you, my dear Sister, what was said to the Prophet *Esay*. Go and Prophesy stark naked spiritually; and I may add what was said to that Holy Queen by the Royal Prophet. *Hear Daughter and consider, forget the Populace (or Rude Crowd) of thy affections, and the House*

House of thy Temporal Father, and the King will affectionately embrace and love this thy beautifull spiritual Nakedness and Simplicity.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Of perfect abandoning and casting our selves upon God.

THE Exercise of casting our selves entirely upon GOD, is the same as to give him absolutely our *Will*. The practice of this Virtue consists of a perfect Indifferency to receive all sorts of Casualties, in the same order as it pleases the Divine Providence to send them. To do this we must obey the Will of GOD signify'd to us, and submit to his good pleasure. The one is done by way of Resignation, the other by the way of Indifferency.

This Exercise of leaving our selves in the hands of GOD, comprehends our abandoning our selves to his pleasure in all Temptations, Dryness,

Drynes, Distractions, Aversions, and Repugnances which happen to us, in our Spiritual Life. For we may be sure it is Gods pleasure they should happen, when they do not come thro' our Fault, nor proceed from any sinfull defect. In a word this giving our selves up perfectly to GOD's disposal, is the Virtue of Virtues : 'Tis the cream or Flower of Charity, the odiferous scent of Humility, the true merit of Patience, and the fruit of Perseverance. Great then is this Virtue, and only worthy to be practised by the dearest Children of GOD. *My Father (says our dying Saviour on the Cross) into your hands I remit my Spirit,* as much as to say ; If it be your Will that I remain still in these Torments on the Cross, I am content, so your Divine Pleasure be done. We ought, my dear Daughter, do the same in all occasions whatever, whether we suffer Pain or enjoy Pleasure, without preventing our desire of having his Will fulfill'd by any particular Will of our own. Our Lord

Lord loves most tenderly those Souls, who do wholly surrender themselves to his Fatherly care; and readily follow the Conduct of his Divine Providence ; resting assur'd that he will certainly order what is best for them, nor suffer any thing to happen to them but what will turn to the advantage and greater profit of their Soul, so we do as we ought, place our whole Confidence in him. For, we can never be brought to such an Extremity but we shall still be able to pour out before his Divine Majesty the rich Perfumes of a holy submission, and a resigned Will, of a Resolution to serve him and never offend him. Our good Lord sometimes wills that his choice and best beloved Children should follow him, with the most pointed and finest part of their Spirit, without any kind of other thing to rest themselves, or rely on, but his Divine Will. You see here my Daughter, in what Path I would have you walk.

A Soul thus self abandon'd, has no more to do, but to rest quiet in the Arms of her Lord, as a Child does in the Bosome of its Mother ; which, when she sets him down to try and enure his feeble Limbs to walk, venters to step no further than his Mother may catch hold of him again, if he be like to fall ; and when she has a mind to take him up again and carry him in her Arms, he lets her do so without Repugnance, nay with much content. In the same manner a Soul which loves the Will and good Pleasure of GOD, does, in whatsoever happens, submit it self to be carryed by him, and takes its little steps forward, relying on his ever ready support ; yet carefully performing whatever it knows to be his Will ; and, as soon as it perceives any particular Inclination of her own begin to make her leave off GOD's Conduct, she presently mortifies it by making only the Will of GOD liye in her. There are very few who arrive at this degree of abandoning themselves perfectly ; but

but yet we ought all of us pretend to it and endeavour it, every one according to his Capacity.

CHAP. XXXV.

An Exercise for the Week.

TO make your spiritual Retreat, you may make use of these Points here hinted, which regard the Divine Infancy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As for the Week, consider him shut up in the most Holy Womb of his Blessed Mother; and admire that his Immensity would, for our Love, reduce its self into so narrow a Compass.

On *Monday*, Admire him in the Crib; in extream Poverty, and desire to imitate him.

On *Tuesday*, Consider how the Angels and the Shephards adore him; and joyning your Devotions with them, offer him your most prostrate Adorations.

On

On *Wednesday*, Consider how early he began to suffer for us, by shedding his precious Blood at his Circumcision: And beg of him that he would retrench and cut off all superfluities from your Soul.

On *Thursday*, employ your self in meditating on the Mysterious offerings, that the three Kings presented to him: Make an offering to him of your whole Heart, and adore him with them.

On *Friday*, Contemplate him in the Temple in the Arms of his blessed Mother; and consecrate your Heart to him, and beg of him to purifie it, and accept it for his Habitation.

On *Saturday*, Meditate on his Flight into *Ægypt*: Implore his Heavenly Grace that you may fly from all sin, and from all things that are any ways disagreeable to his Divine Purity.

C H A P. XXXVI.

*An Exercise upon the Passion of
our Lord.*

FOR the Week; Consider him as washing the Feet of his beloved Disciples. Beg of him to wash and purify your Heart from all filth of Sin.

On *Munday*, Consider him as in the Garden of *Olivet*, begging of his Heavenly Father with tears the Cup of his bitter Passion may, if possible, be excused; and yet perfectly resigning himself to suffer it if it were his pleasure. Intreat him humbly to bestow on you the gift of Prayer in all your greatest troubles and derelictions.

On *Tuesday*, Meditate with what Sweetness and Meekness he received the Kiss of the Traytor *Judas*. Beseech him to grant you Charity and Sweetness towards your Enemies.

Ou

On *Wednesday*, Consider him as apprehended and bound by the *Jews*. Ask of him Patience in all your Tribulations.

On *Thursday*, Admire how the King of Heaven and Earth suffers himself without the least resistance, to be cloathed in a Fools Habit at *Herod's House*. Beg of him Humility and Contempt of your self.

On *Friday*, Consider how willingly and courageously, he bears the heavy burthen of the Cross upon his wounded Shouldiers to *Mount Calvary*. Make many fervent acts of Compassion for his unspeakable Pains and Grief.

On *Saturday*, Lift up your Eyes, behold him lie stretched out at his full length, nail'd to the Cross, and rais'd upon it in the Air. Lend an attentive Ear to all his sweet words. Pray to him that you may live and die in his holy Fear and Love, who dyed so lovingly for you.

C H A P. XXXVII.

Of the Esteem which ought to be made of our Rules, and that they ought to be observed out of Love.

IF you would live happily and with perfection, you must accustom your self, to live according to *Reason*, your *Rules* and *Obedience*; and not according to your Inclinations and Aversions; nay you ought to bear a great Honour for all things that belong to your Religious State; for, if you slight one of them to day, and another to morrow, the tie and obligation you have to observe them being broke, all will fall to the Ground.

The Rules and Observance of Religion, are that gradual Ladder of *Jacob*, by which holding fast all the way to the Virtue of *Charity*, you may by a Religious Life, mount up to Heaven and descend down again to your selves by Humility.

For,

For, tho' they do not oblige under sin as they are *Rules*, yet, how seldom soever you transgress them, still you will neglect a proper means to advance you in Virtue. And, if we are to render an account of every idle word, how much more of every idle and unprofitable neglect of that fruit, which the Exercise of the Rules, to which we are oblig'd, brings to our Souls.

According to the measure, that Divine Love makes progress in a Religious Soul; so much she will be more exact and carefull to observe all the Constitutions of her Order, tho' they do not oblige her under sin. For *Love*, as the Scripture tells us, is as prevalent a motive as *Death*; and therefore it will be as strongly attractive to make us keep our good Resolutions, as if *Death* had been threatned us if we break them.

Zeal (as the Holy *Canticle* tells us) is as *hard*, firm or inflexible as *Hell*; whence those Souls which have true Zeal to arrive at perfection,

fection, will, through the Virtue of that immoveable Disposition, do as much or more, as they would do for fear of *Hell* it self. The sweet violence of heavenly Love, is far more agreeable to our nature than the fear of Eternal Damnation; because to act out of Inclination is more natural to us, than to act out of Constraint.

He that keeps the Commandment (says Solomon) *preserves his Soul,* and *he that neglects his way, procures his own Death.* Your way, my Daughter, is this sort of Life in which GOD has put you. I do not speak here of your *Vows*, because it is most evident that who ever does transgress his *Essential Obligation* and his *Vows*, is questionless guilty of a heinous mortal Sin.

C H A P. XXXVIII.

*Of the Difficulties which occur in
your Spiritual Conduct.*

AS for what concerns you
Conduct, or manner of Go
verning others, do not complain of
the loss of your spiritual Conven
iences, and of the particular Con
tentment of your inclination
which you undergo by cultivatin
those dear Souls, which are com
mitted to your charge: For GO
will abundantly requite it in th
Day of your spiritual Nuptial
The Brides in ancient times wo
no Crowns, or Chaplets of Flower
on their Marriage Day, but tho
which themselves had gathered
and tyed up together in a dece
Order. Those little Souls you g
vern, are your Flowers; and if yo
order them right, you will we
them for your Crown at th
solemn Festival. Beg of our Lor

that, to this end, he would give you the Spirit of Sweetness and Simplicity, the Spirit of Love and Humility, the Spirit of Gentleness and Purity, the Spirit of Chearfulness and Mortification; all these are requisite accomplishments for a good Superiour. For the Spirit of him whose place they bear, is Generous Sweet and Humble.

You know, my dear Daughter, what the Fire which *Moses* saw on the Mountain, represented to us, the nature of Holy Love; and as those flames were nourish'd by the jewel of the Thorns, so the Exercises of sacred Charity, are far better mantained amongst Tribulations, than in the midst of Contentments. Take Courage then, my Daughter, let us walk forwards undefatigably in these low and intricate paths. Let us all our Life long, carry the Cross in our arms, with Humility and Patience. 'Tis all one to us, whether GOD speaks to us from the midst of Flowers or Thorns. But, indeed, I do not find that he ever spoke to us from the midst

midst of *Flowers*, but very often
that he vouchsafes to do this from
among *brambles*, and in the *Desart*.
Let us then, my dear Daughter,
walk on cheerfully, tho' in bad
weather and the dark Night. This
is the only proper way to imitate
your heavenly Spouse, who did
never find his beloved lolling in
her bed. Lift your Eyes to Hea-
ven and you will find never a
Mortal there, now made Immor-
tal, but such who arrived there
thro' continual troubles and af-
fictions. This is the *Road-way* to
Heaven: I see my Harbour and am
well assur'd that the rudest tem-
pests can never make me miscarr
in my Voyage, if I steer my course
by GOD's holy Will.

In admonishing others, use *Lov*
and *Sweetness*: 'Tis this that makes
Reprehensions more effectual, and
without this it does mischief by
damping those poor Souls who
are weak.

Oh! How happy will it be for
you to walk still in the low Path
of *Humility*, and this with a great
Courage

Courage, and that Courage plac'd
 in GOD! Live among your dear
 Children with a holy Joy: Show
 and offer to them your spiritual
 Eat with affection, with kind looks
 and a gracious demeanour, to invite
 them to suck thence the nourish-
 ment of purest Virtue, with glad-
 ness and cheerfulness. I do not bid
 you be fawning, cajolling, or over-
 ocond with them. But I exhort
 you to be Sweet, Kind, Loving and
 Affable. In a word, frame your
 Comportment to a cordial and mor-
 therly Love; be a kind of pastoral
 Nurse to your Daughters, and you
 will do all that is requisite: You
 will by this become All to All; a
 Mother to All, and a succour and
 help to All. This is that only
 Comportment which suffices; and
 without which all other things are
 deficient.

C H A P. XXXIX.

Of the means how to fix your Spirit in GOD, that nothing can divert it from him.

YOU will ask me, my dear Daughter, by what way you may so rivet your affections and the Spirit to GOD, that nothing can now detach you from him. I answer, two things are necessary to do this; *Die*, and be *Sav'd*; for after this there can be no Separation. You will say, this does not answer your question, your enquiry being *What* you are to do, to hinder that *the least trifle* do not draw back your Spirit from GOD *here*, as you *first* find it does; *waving the least Distraction*. Pardon me, my dear Daughter, 'tis not any little Distraction which at all separates your Spirit from GOD, nor any other thing whatever, whether you fancy it great or little, but only *Sin*.

I have oft times observed that many weak uninstructed Souls, make no difference between GOD, and the Sentiment or Perception they have of GOD ; between Faith and the Sentiment they have of Faith ; which is a very great Error. It seems to them, that when they have no actual Perception of GOD, they leave off to be in his presence, which is a gross piece of ignorance. A Person who is going to suffer Martyrdom for GOD's sake, perhaps has no Sentiment of GOD, but only of the Pain he feels all the while he is suffering ; yet still he ceases not to merit all that time, in virtue of his first Resolution, and exercises an act of the greatest Charity. There is, I say, great difference between having the presence of GOD, (I mean the being spiritually in his presence) and to have a Perception of his presence. It is only GOD only who can do us this later favour, for to prescribe you methods how to acquire this Perception is altogether impossible.

Do you ask how you are to preserve continually a great Reverence towards GOD, as being altogether unworthy of so high a favour? answer, there is no other mean to obtain this Grace, but to consider well that he is our GOD and we his poor weak Creature and utterly unworthy of the Honour. This was the way S Francis took, who continued whole Night asking GOD in the words; *who are you O Lord, and who am I?* And if you importune me to know what you must do to acquire the love of GOD; I answer, 'tis by having a *Will to love him*. Instead of studying and putting interrogatories what you are to do, endeavour to keep your Spirit united to GOD, put in practice a continual application of your mind to him, and I do assure you, you will gain your pretensions far sooner, than by any other way you can invent; for by distracting and dissipating your Spirit into many Thoughts, you become less recollected, and then

less capable of joining and uniting your mind with the Divine Majesty, who requires of us our whole heart without reserve. There are some Souls, who employ themselves so solicitously in thinking what they shall do, that they have no leisure to do any thing at all; and yet, as for what concerns our Perfection which consists in the Union of our Soul with the Divine Goodness, the Question is, not how little we know, but how much we do.

The best answer those who are askt how they must go to Heaven can give, is to answer that they must still take one step and then another, or set one foot before the other, and that by this means they will certainly come thither. Go still forwards if you desire to arrive at Perfection: Walk on in the plain Road of your Vocation with Simplicity, bending your endeavours rather to do, than to think, and this is the shortest way you can take. But give me leave without offence to discover to you a

subtilty, of which perhaps you are not aware ; you would have me teach you a way of Perfection made up to your hand, so that there is no more to do, but to clap it over you as you do your Gown : which done, you might find your self perfect without any more trouble ; that is, you would have me give you such a Perfection which costs you no pains in gaining it, and not such a one as needs your labour in working it out, because this taking of pains is disagreeable to your Nature.

You seem to have taken a conceit, that Perfection is a kind of *Art*, which is learned by a trick ; so that if one could but find out the secret of it, he would immediately become Master of it, without any more trouble. Alas ! we deceive our selves : There is no other, nor greater secret but to labour faithfully in the Exercile of divine Love, if we would arrive at an Union with our best beloved. But when I say you must work, act, and labour : I would be understood to

to mean you must do this, or work, with the *Superior* part of your Soul; for, as for the Repugnances you find in the Inferior, you ought no more to wonder at them or regard them, then Passengers do at Dogs that bark at them at a distance.

Let us proceed now to the other demand of yours, which is, what you must do to strengthen your Resolutions, so that they may be brought to effect: The best way is to endeavour to put them in practise. You desire to amend and perfect your self, and when the occasion to do so is presented, you despond and fall flat on the ground. Would you know how it comes that we remain so weak? 'Tis because we will still be tasting unwholesome Food. For example, we desire to love Correction, and yet we retain a great desire to be esteem'd: What a Folly, what an Impossibility is this! How can you ever have strength to bear Correction, while you feed on the windy meat of Self Esteem? Take

another instance. I desire to keep my Soul recollect, and yet I am not willing to retrench and cut off Multitudes of unprofitable Thoughts and Reflections. This is equally impossible. Again, I would gladly be firm and unalterable in my holy Exercises; and yet I am loath to take pains in performing them. In a word, I have a mind to find all my work done to my hand; which cannot be in this Life; for we must always labour, or we can never be perfect. The Feast of this Purification does not only last till its Octave, (of which it has none) but must be perpetually continu'd. We must equally resolve on two things; one is to see that the weeds of bad inclinations grow not in our Garden; the other to have the Courage to pluck them up and root them out; nay, to endeavour to root out even our selves, I mean our *selfishness*, from our own heart. For self-love never dies totally, while we live here; and 'tis this proper Love and Esteem

steep which Produces and gives
growth to all these Weeds.

CHAP. XXXX.

*How to keep our Resolutions firm
and unshaken amidst the diverse
accidents of this World.*

When GOD said, *Let us make
Man according to our own
Image and Likeness*, he immediately
gave him *Reason*, and the use of it,
to distinguish Good from Evil, and
to discern what things are fit to
be chosen, what to be eschewed.
'Tis this *Reason* which teaches us
that we ought to consider the diverse
dispositions of divine Providence,
to make our best advantage
of them, and still to conform our
selves to them, and govern our
selves accordingly, in the various
Circumstances of our spiritual Life,
in which firmness and constancy
are absolutely necessary. 'Tis a
great abuse of our *Reason*, to be
unwilling to suffer, or feel Temptations.

tations and changes in our humours, while we do not govern our selves by Reason, nor will let it govern us. GOD has indeed given us Reason for our Guide, yet how few are there that will follow its Instructions, but on the contrary follow the conduct of their Passions? Hence it comes that they are so fickle, inconstant, and changeable in their humours. If they have a Passion, or Appetite to go to Bed, too early or too late, they comply with its suggestion: If to do, or not to do this thing or that, they yield readily to it, and so in the rest. 'Tis this which makes them behave themselves as Fops, or Changelings, not only in their affections, but also in their Conversation. They make account all Men must accomodate themselves to what they like, and yet think they are not to frame themselves to the desires of others. They suffer themselves to be carryed, or rather hurry'd, by their inclinations and particular affections, perverting thus the Order GOD has establish'd in

in the World, which is, that we should all of us be subject to *Reason*,

If *Reason* does not maintain its ascendent over us, over all our Powers and Faculties, over all our Passions, Humours and Inclinations, and, in a word, over all we have or are, we shall be lost in a continual Vicissitude, Change and Inconstancy; we shall be now sad, now jocund; to Day Fervent, to morrow Sloathfull; we shall be Calm and Compos'd for an hour, and afterwards for two Days Froward and Distraught; in a word, our whole Life will be spent in Idleness and loss of Time. We ought therefore to make it our continual endeavour to follow the conduct of *Reason*, least meeting with such unforeseen encounters as are apt to fret and vex our Spirit, we fall into troubles and disturbances. Let us preserve our interiour Peace in an even tenour amidst all the uneven contingencies that may happen; steering our thoughts and actions still by the compass of *Reason*, which GOD has put in

us, and remaining Firm, Constant, and Unchangeable in our Resolutions, to serve him Faithfully, Steadily, and Fervently; and to preserve in us from all discontinuance of serving him as we ought, I must repeat it over and over again, and if need be, inculcate it a thousand times that we ought to bend our most especial endeavours, that the inequality of accidents that occurs do not transport us into an inequality of Humour; which always springs from our *Passions*, and our unmortify'd inclinations and affections, over which our *Reason* ought to maintain her Sovereignty. Let us consider how St. Joseph behaved himself when he saw the Blessed Virgin with Child, and was unacquainted with the Mystery. He suffered the inward trouble of mind it gave him, without letting it break out in his exterior carriage. He neither complain'd nor lamented: He us'd no bitterness nor churlishness in his Conversation; nor cast so much as an ill look at his Blessed Spouse, much less treated

tan treated her ill ; which any Man, but one so Holy and Just as he was, would have thought he might serve in right do ; perhaps that he ought even to do it in Duty.

But you will say, my Aversion towards such a Person is so extreme, that I can scarce endure to speak to her ; such an action is so displeasing to me, I can never be able to suffer it. But you must not, for all this dislike, enter into any contest with that Person as Cholerick People use ; but suffer and bear with her Charitably, as St. Joseph did with our Lady. Continue peaceable and quiet, notwithstanding your Trouble and Repugnance, and leave the care to GOD's Providence, to free you from that Vexation when he shall see fit.

What you are only to heed is your own Perfection ; nor yet ought you have a too solicitous care even of that, but leave it entirely to GOD. You are only to have such a care of perfecting your Soul, as GOD wills you should have ; what

what GOD wills is, that we should use a calm and peaceable endeavour, or such a one as is judged proper for us by those under whose conduct he has plac'd us. For the rest, we are to leave it to his Fatherly care, endeavouring, as much as is possible, to keep our Souls in Peace. For the Temple of *Solomon*, which he chose for his Habitation, was made or built in peace, that is by a peaceable King, and without noise; nor is any but a peaceable and quiet heart, a fit dwelling place for the Holy Ghost.

Let us then employ all our care, that nothing, I say, *nothing at all* does trouble and disquiet us. If we be put into an Office which is disgusting to us, let us not fall to complain, or say, if they put this charge upon me I shall fall into a thousand sallies of Impatience and violent Hurry; or, I am already too much subject to Distractions, and this will make me distracted ten times more. Had they condemn'd me to my Cell, I could have remain'd Quiet, Moderate and Recollect,

collected ; but now, leave such complaints, I say, and go on in a holy Simplicity whether your Obedience leads you. 'Tis GOD that puts you there ; do not desert the Station in which he has plac'd you, he will uphold and strengthen you to maintain your Post. On the contrary, if you will needs *stay* where your own Inclination detains you, your proper Will will make you *Die* there. Embrace what Obedience puts upon you, without making Excuses : GOD is on your side while you do so, and will make you advance more in Perfection among the fatiguing troubls you undergo, than if you had your own humour to sit still, and do nothing.

C H A P. XXXXI.

Of renouncing our Propriety to any thing, and stripping our selves naked of all things.

THIS totally *Devesting* our selves here spoken of, is made by three Degrees. The first is, the having an Affection for it, because of its Beauty and Excellence. The second is; the Resolution which follows this Affection; for we are easily won to Embrace a Good, after we have once imbib'd an Affection for it. The third is, the Practice of it, which is the hardest of the three.

'Tis true, my dear Sister, that none can possibly arrive at Perfection as long as they retain an Affection for any Imperfection, how little soever it be, even tho' it be no more but an Idle and Unprofitable Thought: You cannot imagine what mischief such a trifle (as the World thinks it) brings to a Soul; you must therefore cut it short

short, and utterly reject it as soon as ever you perceive it. Examine then your Conscience seriously whether your affection is engaged in any such Affection: For example, whether you affect to speak some word to gain Praise or Applause. If you find you have, then, 'tis out of doubt you have an affection for Vanity. You will easily discover whether you have or no, or whether you be attacht to such a Vanity, by reflecting on your self when you have no opportunity of doing what you had propos'd to your self; for, if you have no affection for it, you will have no disquiet, or regret to have omitted it; on the other side, if you find some trouble, or *regret* that you mist the occasion of pursuing that vain end, then you did certainly *Affect* it. Now our Affections are so precious (in regard they ought to be wholly employ'd upon GOD) that we must take great heed, not to spend or lavish them upon unprofitable Objects; and one fault (tho' it be a very little one) done out of *Affection*,
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is more contrary to Perfection, than a hundred others done out of Surprise, or in such a manner as that the Affection was not engaged in it.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of the three Rules borrowed from Doves, and apply'd to Religious Souls.

Tis no wonder the holy Spouse in the *Canticles* compares his beloved to a *Dove*; for a Soul truly enamour'd of GOD ought to have all the *Dove-like* Properties and Qualifications, which are these.

The first is, that the Dove does all her chief Actions for the common good of the Dove-house. You may observe that the Dove, while she is hatching her Eggs, never stirs off them; she never rambles a forraging for her Food; Oh, how agreeable and profitable a Rule is this to do nothing but for GOD, and to leave to him the care of

of our Particular ! How happy and safe a condition is it I say, to do nothing but for GOD, and to know that he is solicitous for you, and will order all things for your good, especially, as to those spiritual Concerns which advance your Soul to Perfection ! How blessed should we be if we made our dear Jesus the last End and Aim of all our Actions, which obliges his infinite Goodness to a reciprocal Love of us, and a Care of our Eternal Welfare ! According to the measure of the Confidence we place in him, he will proportionably extend his providential care over us, which can never fail those that trust in him. His goodness is infinite towards a Soul that trusts in him. She will enjoy a Tranquility and Peace, beyond what all this World can give her ; and a Repose which is the same with his own, which he communicates to the Blessed in Heaven, where she will be certain to enjoy eternally, and fully the chaste Embraces of her Heavenly Spouse.

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Dwell then secure in this holy Repose. What a pity it is to see great numbers of Souls, who pretend to Perfection, wearying out themselves in restless inquiries. They imagine that all consists in making a Multitude of Acts of *Desires*. They vex and hurry themselves in seeking out, now this means, than streight another, to arrive at their End. In the mean time they are never content, never at quiet within themselves. They think they never can find Persons enow to ask their advice, how they may find proper and (the old not succeeding) *new* means to compass what they are in quest of: In a word, they so amuse themselves continually with *talking* of Perfection, that they forget to *practise* the principal means of all, which is to retire themselves in this calm Tranquility of Spirit, and to cast all their care, and Confidence on him, who only can give increase to what himself has planted. All our good depends entirely on the Grace of GOD; which is

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our only help and support. One good work done well with Tranquility of mind, is far more worth than multitudes perform'd in hurry and disquiet.

The Soul which is truly Dove like, that is, which loves GOD dearly, applies her self simply and calmly to use the means prescribed her, without hankering or searching after others, tho' they seem never so perfect. Consider, I beseech you, the Life of some of the great Saints and Masters of Spirituality. By what means came St. *Anthony* so much Honoured by GOD and Men for his extrarodinary Sanctity, to such Perfection and Holiness? Was it by Virtue of his *Reading*, was it by spiritual *Conferences*, frequent *Communion*, or by the Multitude of the *Sermons* he preach'd? Not at all; but by following the example of the Religious that went before him. Did St. *Paul* the Hermit gain his Sanctity by the Reading of good Books? Alas! He had none to read. Did he get it then by frequent

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Communions or Confessions? He never did this more than twice in his whole Life. **Was it then by Conferences or Preaching?** No, he did no such thing, nor saw so much as one Man in the Desert where he lived, but only St. *Anthony* who went to visit him when he was near his Death. Know then how he came to be such a Saint; Only by the Fidelity and Constancy he us'd in applying himself to what he had undertaken at the beginning, and to that to which he was call'd; and not amusing himself with any other thing.

Those great Religious Saints, who liv'd under the Conduct of St. *Pachomius*, had they any Books, or did they use Preaching? Not in the least. Had they any Conferences? Not at all. Did they go often to Confession? Only at great Festivals. Did they hear multitudes of Masses? Only on Sundays and Holy-Days and never else. But you will ask, how came it then that having so few assistances in Comparison of what we have, they arriv'd to such a high Pitch of

Perfection, and that we, having so many, do thus fall short of their Sanctity, and have so little courage to serve GOD, unless supported by spiritual Consolations? I answer, this happens thro' our Inconstancy, and the want of that Solidity and Firmness of which they were Masters. Let us then imitate these holy Religious, by applying our selves to our proper business, that is, to what GOD requires of us in order to our Vocation and Duty: by performing it humbly, and constantly, and by minding nothing else; esteeming no other means more effectual to bring us to Perfection, than what the Rules of our State prescribe.

The second Property of the Dove is, that she says in her Language, the more they take from me, the more I work. That is, as soon as the Master of the Dove-house takes from her, her little ones when they grow big, she presently sets her self to hatch others. To understand this better, reflect on the Example of Job, who had the Honour to be prais'd by GOD's own Mouth.

Mouth. He never suffered himself to be overcome by any Affliction that happened to him, but the more GOD took from him the more he did; and was still more Devout. And what duty did he not do in his Prosperity? Read his History, and you will find he neglected nothing that became a Pious Person.

Reflect how, when afterwards he was reduced to the Extremity of Misery, he never complain'd of his good GOD, he never yielded to any Impatience, but said with the Dove, *the more God takes from me, the more I'll endeavour to do*: And how would he do it? Not by giving Alms, for he had nothing to give, but by this sole Act of submission and Patience, which he made when he saw himself bereft of all kind of Comfort; he did more by this Act alone, than he had done in the whole time of his Prosperity, by all the great Charities he had bestowed; and he rendered himself more pleasing to God by this one Act of Conformity, Patience, and Resignation, than by

all the good works he had done in his whole Life ; because there needed a more strong and vigorous Love of GOD to make this one Act, than there needed to do all the others.

The same must we do to observe this excellent Rule and Property of the Dove. We must suffer ourselves to be bereav'd by the Owner of the Dove-house, of our little Ones, that is. of the means to execute our Desires, whenever he pleases to take them from us (how good soever they be) without complaining or resenting that we are injuriously, or hardly dealt with : But instead of this ; we must apply our selves to double our Deligence, and put in practice more carefully, not our Inclinations, or our Exercises themselves but the Perfection with which we do them ; endeavouring to gain more by this one Act (as most certainly we shall) than we could ever do by a hundred of others which our particular Affection or Propension puts us upon performing. Once more I

assure you, that one only Act done in Dryness of Spirit, is more worth than many others done, when you have tender and gustful Devotion.

The third Property of the Dove is, that she *Laments* in the same manner of Expression, as she uses when she *Rejoyces*. She utters still the same Tone and the same Air, both for her Song of Jubilee, and for Groans of Grief, or when she would Complain and Manifest her Sorrow.

'Tis this Holy Evenness of Spirit, my dear Daughter, which I earnestly recommend to you. I do not speak here of Equality of Humour, or Inclination in your common Demeanour, but of Equality, or Evenness of Spirit. I would not have you regard, or make much account of those trifles that the inferiour part of your Soul makes, which is that which gives you such frequent Disquiets; what I desire is, that you should always continue firm, and keep up a conitant Resolution, in the superior part of your

your Spirit, to follow those Virtues of which you make Profession, and to be still the same in Adversity as in Prosperity. In this Point, the Example of the same Holy Job, will do us good Service. For he still continues the same strain, nor will you find any words in his History that refer to GOD, which are not all of a Piece. *The name of the Lord be Praised*, was the Canticle of Love, which he Sung all along; *the Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, be his Holy Name ever Blessed*. Oh, how chaste and amourous a Dove, was his Holy Soul! Do you the same, my dear Daughter, and you will live with such a Peace as no Events can Change or Violate, nor all the Contrarities and Oppositions, that daily assault you, disturb.

You see then the three Rules, or Properties of a *Dove*, all which proceed from, and oblige thro' *Love*; and therefore the *Love* of our dear Lord should win us to observe them, that so we may say with the Beautiful Dove, the Spouse in the *Canticles*,

ticles, my well beloved is mine, and I am wholly his ; nor will I do any thing but to please him ; his heart is always fixt upon me by his careful Providence, and mine is fixt upon him by my assured and loving Trust and Confidence.

Having done all you can for your Dearest and best-beloved Lord in this Life, he will carry you with him into his Glory, where you will experience the happiness of those, who, forsaking all superfluous Care and Disquietness, (which generally we have for our selves and our own Perfection) are intent, and attentively fixt to see that blessfull Object, his whole Soul-ravishing Essence at one simple View ; abandoning themselves without any reserve into the Arms of that Divine and Infinite goodness for which they labour'd here. Again, the Happiness of thoe who have observ'd the second of these Properties or Rules, will be me imable : For resigning and giving up themselves wholly to be bereav'd, and stript of all by their Heavenly Master

ster and Conductor, and continuing to say, *the more he takes from me, the more I'll do*, and remaining in all things subject to his Divine Pleasure, they will Sing forever Songs of Jubilee and Exaltion in those Heavenly Mansions: Which will, I hope, encourage you to preserve carefully this aimable, and continual Equality and Quiet Composure of your Spirit.

C H A P. XXXIII.

How you ought to receive the Holy Sacraments.

THE Sacraments are the Channels and Vehicles by which GOD descends to us, as Prayer is the Passage, or way by which we ascend to GOD.

The Sacraments are in themselves diverse, tho' the End and Aim of them all is one and same. viz. to unite us to GOD. We will treat, at present of two

of them only, that is of Penitence and of the Holy Eucharist.

And, in the first Place, it is most necessary to let you know the reason why, tho' we receive these two Sacraments so often, we receive not also those Graces which they are ordained, and wont to bring to those Souls that are well prepar'd, since those Graces are joyned to those Sacraments, as Effects are with their proper Causes. I'll tell you in one word, it is for want of *due Preparation*: Whence 'tis my duty to instruct how, to prepare your self to receive them.

The first Preparation then is *Purity of Intention*; the second is *Attention*, and the third is *Humility*.

As for Purity of Intention, 'tis a Disposition altogether necessary, not only for the receiving the Sacraments, but also for every action we perform thro' our whole Lives. Now our Intention is *Pure*, when we come to the Sacraments, or do any other thing, whatever it be, that we may better unite our Wills

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to GOD, or be more acceptable, and more beloved by him, without the mixture of any other Interest. You will easily discover whether you aim at these best Ends or no by this ; that if you desire to receive and are not permitted to do it, or if, after receiving you find no spiritual Comfort in your Soul, and yet, notwithstanding these difficulties, you still remain in *Peace*, without consenting to the assaults which the Enemy makes in such occasions ; then your Intention was *Pure* ; but if, on the contrary, you give way and consent to, or deliberately entertain such suggestions as make your Spirit disturb'd and disquiet, because they refuse to let you receive, or because you find not this inward Consolation ; then 'tis evident your Intention was not *Pure* ; and that you did not aim by that action to unite your heart to GOD, but to those Consolations ; since you might have had a hearty union with God with out them, by means of holy Obedience. In like manner, if you desire Perfection with such a wish

as fills your Mind full of Disquiet, 'tis a manifest sign that it springs from self-love, which makes you afraid others should observe any Imperfection in you. If it were possible that we could be as pleasing to GOD remaining Imperfect, as if we were Perfect; we in that case ought to desire to please him without affecting to be perfect, that we might by this means nourish in our Souls the Virtue of Holy Humility.

The second Preparation is *Attention*. In every *ordinary* Action we do, we ought to have our mind apply'd to it; much more must such Holy and Solemn things, instituted by Christ himself, require it of us. For example, going to Confession, we ought to bring thither a heart lovingly *Sorrowful*; and coming to Communion, a heart *ardently loving*. I do not mean, while I recommend to you this great Attention, that you must have no Distractions; for this is not in our Power. I only intend that you ought to have a very particular care not to give way

way to them, or continue them voluntarily.

The third Preparation is *Humility*; a Virtue certainly most necessary to derive to our Souls those Heavenly Graces, which flow thro' those sacred Channells; for all Waters use to run more swiftly and strongly, when the Conduct Pipes are placed near their source, and when they bend their course downwards.

But, besides these Preparations, I have yet one word more to say to you, which is, that the principal Preparation of all, is the casting our selves totally without any reserve, upon the mercy of GOD; submitting our whole Will, and all our Affections to his absolute Rule and Government. I say, *without any Reserve*; for such is our Misery and Wretchedness, that we are apt still to reserve slyly to our proper Will some darling concern or other. Even the most spiritual Persons do ordinarily reserve to themselves a desire for high Virtues. Alas! To reserve, or except any Will of our

own, is not the way to compass this Union, tho' those desires have never so fair and glorious an Appearance. Seeing our Lord gives his whole self to us, he requires of us this reciprocal Correspondence, that we should unite our Wills *entirely* with him, that so it may become consummate and perfect, and make us able to say with that great Pattern of Christian Perfection, St. Paul, *I do not live my self, but rather 'tis Jesus Christ who lives in me.*

The other Part of this Preparation consists in emptying your heart of all *created* Objects, that our Lord may fill them with *himself*. Certainly the reason why we do not always receive the Grace of Sanctification (since communicating only once as we ought, is capable and sufficient to make us Holy and Perfect) proceeds meerly from this, that we do not let our Lord reign so entirely in us, as his Goodness requires we should. This best beloved of our Souls comes to visit us, and finds our heart full of desires, by affections and petty Self-Wills:

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This is not that for which he comes to look; he would find them empty of all Creatures that he may render himself entire Master and Governor of them; to show how much he desires to be so, his loving Language to his sacred Spouse is, that he wears her *like a signet upon his Heart*, to the end that nothing may enter there but by his permission.

Perhaps you would know whether you have profited or no, by coming to these Sacraments: This is best gathered by considering, whether you have advanced or no, in those Virtues, which are proper for those holy Duties, *viz.* Whether or no you have got by Confession a greater Love of your own Abjection and of Humility: For these are the Virtues which particularly belong to that Sacrament, and the greater degrees of Humility are the proper standard, by which we are to rate the measure of our Advancement. You have oft heard our Saviours words: *He that Humbles himself shall be Exalted:* Now

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to be *Exalted*, is to have *advanced* or *increast* in *Virtue*. If, by receiving the Holy Communion, you become more sweet humour'd and Charitable, (this being the proper Virtue of this Sacrament, which is all Sweetnes and the Honey of Love) then you may be assured you have the Fruit and Benefit of it to your Souls advantage. But if, on the contrary, you do not become more Charitable and Sweet natur'd by receiving it, then 'tis but just to take from you this Bread of Life, since it so little nourishes you, and does not make you thrive in that Virtue, for which it was particularly ordain'd. You will ask how you may be able to make an Act of Contrition in a short time. I answer, there scarce needs *any* time *at all* to make it, seeing you have no more to do, but to prostrate your self before GOD, in the Spirit of Humility, and with hearty Repentance, that you have ever offended him.

CHAP. XXXXIV.

Of Saying the Divine Office.

YOU request I would give you some Instructions how to say the Divine Office, I am very willing to comply with your Desire. I tell you then first, that you must make your Preparation to say it from the very instant you hear the Bell that calls you to that Duty. For in all our Exercises whatever, we must bring along with us, that Spirit that is proper to perform it. It would look very odd to go to your Office, in the same manner as you go to your Recreation: You must carry to your Recreation a Spirit of Joy, sweetned with *Love*; but to your Office, a spirit full of *Love only*.

When you say, *O God intend unto my Aid*, make account that our Lord does say to you on his side: *And be you attentive unto me.*

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Let those who understand some thing of the Office, employ faithfully that Talent according to the good pleasure of GOD, who gave it them, to help to keep them recollected, by means of the good Affections they may draw thence ; and let those who understand nothing of it, keep themselves simply attentive to GOD there present ; or let them continue making loving Ejaculations to him, while the other Quire says the Versicle, and those on their side do pause.

I would not have them out of Scruple repeat their Office for their having been distracted in saying it, provided they were not distracted *Voluntarily* ; and tho' you should find your self at the end of some Psalm, without being well assured whether you have said it or no, because your distraction hindered you from reflecting on it, do not scruple to go forwards ; only humble your self before GOD for your inconsideratness : For you must not think that you were therefore

fore negligent, because your Distraction continu'd some long time ; since it is possible it may endure all the time of your Office, and yet you may not be at all in fault ; nay tho' you had ill Thoughts in the time of your Distraction, do not disquiet your self at all, only make from time to time simple Reflections towards GOD. I would not have any trouble themselves, that they have such involuntary Thoughts ; but rather, I advise them to endeavour courageously never to yeild their content to them ; for there is a great difference between *Feeling and Consenting.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

Of Prayer.

There are many who are in a great Error, in apprehending that there needs certain kinds of *Methods* to pray as they ought, and therefore they strain themselves to find out a certain *Art* of praying aright ; in which they conceit it necessary they should be instructed. Hereupon they set themselves to speculate acutely upon all the punctilio's belonging to Prayer, that they may know whether they pray'd right or no, or how they may make it agreeable to their Fancies ; imagining that they may scarce cough, or stirr while they are at it, for fear they should chase away the Spirit of God, by such motions ; Which is an enormous Folly. As if the Spirit of God were so delicate and nice, that it depended on their Method, or Countenance. I do not say here, that they ought not avail themselves of those Methods

Methods which are ordinary and mark't out for them to use; but I say, they ought not to tie themselves up to them, as those do (for example,) who think they have never pray'd well, if they do not premise itudy'd Considerations before the good Affections which our Lord gives them; whereas Affections are the *End*, which those considerati-
rns aim at. Such Persons resemble those Travellers, who, finding them-
selves at the place where they de-
signed to go, return back again be-
cause they did not come thither by
the *way*, which others shews
them.

Nevertheless, it is very requisite that you should preserve a high Reverence all the while you speak to the Divine Majesty; since the Angels which are so pure do tremble in his Prescence. But some will say, alas for me, I cannot always know this sense of the Presence of GOD, which keeps the Soul so humble while she is praying; or that sensible Reverence, which may make me annihilate myself so heartily before

before God. Nor is it such a *sensible* Reverence I am speaking of, but of that which the superior part of your Soul makes, which is not at all *Sensible*, and which keeps the highest point of your Mind humble and low, as nothing before GOD, by knowing and acknowledging his infinite Greatness, and your own beggarly Nothingness and Unworthyness.

The best and most assured way of meditating, is, not to frame any Fancies or Imaginations, but to keep those purely, and simply to the literal Sense of the Gospel, and of the Mysteries of our Faith; entertaining your self familiarly and plainly with our Lord, as to what he has done and suffered for you without any study'd representation. Now this manner of Meditating, is much more Elevated and Excellent than the former; and therefore, as it is more Holy and more Solid, so you ought to employ your self in it, tho' it seem not so pleasant and easy: Still taking heed in every degree of Prayer, to keep your

your Spirit in a Holy Liberty to follow the Lights and interiour Motions, which it shall please God to give you. But as for following other manners of Prayer, which are yet more sublime (unless God absolutely bestows them on you) I intreat you not to meddle with them on your own head, or without the advice of your Spiritual Conducter.

CHAP. XXXXVI.

Of Religious Perfection.

THE only pretence we have to be Religious, my Dear Daughter, ought to be to unite our selves with GOD, as Jesus Christ was united with his heavenly Father, when he was dying on the Cross. GOD has chosen you to be his dear Spouse; it concerns you then to know how, and in what sense you are so, or (which is the same) what it is to be Religious. It is to be engaged to GOD, by a continual

continual Mortification of your self ; and not to live but for GOD. Our Hearts therefore must always be serving his Divine Majesty ; our Eyes, our Hands, our Tongue, and all our Faculties, must be wholly consecrated to the Service of the same Divine Master.

Hence it is, that Religion furnishes you with the most proper means imaginable for such a performance, *viz.* Prayer, Lectures, Silence, Recollection of our heart, and withdrawing it from other objects that you may repose in GOD, and in nothing but only in him ; as also with frequent and continual Ejaculations of your Spirit towards him. And because we cannot arrive to this pitch, but by a continual practice of Mortification of all our Passions, Inclinations, Humours and Aversions, we stand obliged to set a strickt Sentinel over our selves to make all these obstacles to perfection die in us. Consider, my Daughter, that if a grain of Wheat, falling upon the Ground does not die, it remains alone ;

lone ; but, if it dies, it will produce a hundred Fold. These words of our Saviour are very clear, being pronounced by his Divine Mouth. But you will tell me this is not that which I expected when I became Religious : I made account, that to be Religious it sufficed, to have a desire to say my Prayers and read good Books ; I hop'd I should have had Visions and Revelations, see Angels in the shape of Men, have Raptures and Extasies. It seem'd to me that I was so Virtuous, so Mortify'd, and so Humble, that every one admir'd me. Was it not Humility enough to speak kindly to my Companions, and to talk of matters of Devotion ; to rehearse among our selves, what I had heard in Sermons ; to carry my self sweetly towards those of the House, at least when they did not contradict me ? And indeed, my dear Daughter, this might do well enough for the World ; but Religion obliges you to do such Works, as are worthy your Vocation ; that is to die to your self in every thing ; as much

in those which are agreeable to you, as in those which are disagreeable, bad, and unprofitable.

Do you imagine that those Religious in the Desart, who arrived at so close an Union with GOD, did raise themselves to that perfect State by following their own Inclinations ? You are mistaken. They mortify'd themselves, even in things which were of their own Nature most Holy ; and though they were much delighted in Singing Divine Hymns, in Reading, Praying, and such other good Actions, yet they did them not to give *themselves* content ; but on the contrary, they oft depriv'd themselves of these pleasures, to apply themselves to works which were painful and laborious. It is true indeed that Souls truly Religious, do receive a thousand sweet contents amongst the Mortifications and Exercises of their holy Religion ; for it is principally to those, that the Holy Ghost imparts his extraordinary Gifts, because they seek nothing but GOD, and the Mortification

cation of their Humours, Passions, and Inclinations. But, if they look after, or expect any thing else, they will fall short of their account, and never obtain those Consolations they pretend to. Wherefore Religious Persons ought to assume an invincible Courage, otherwise they will be sure to find some by-end of their own to pursue, and to retrench the performing their Duties.

The proper Work of Religious, is to cultivate and purify their Spirit, to root out all those ill Effects, which our corrupt nature makes sprout out in our actions. So that we seem still to have something to amend, or do over again better; nor must the Labourer be troubled at his ill Success; for he is not to be blam'd that the Crop is deficient, so he has taken care to cultivate the Ground, and sow his Seed in it seasonably as he ought. In like manner, a Religious Soul must not pine and be disheartned, if she does not quickly gather the ripe Fruit of Perfection and Virtue; provided

she

she takes a prudent and diligent Care to cultivate her heart, by lopping of thence, what she perceives contrary to that Perfection which she is obliged to pretend to; for we are to expect we can never be perfectly cur'd of all the infirmities of our Soul, till we come to Heaven.

When the hour comes assign'd by your Rules, that the Sisters ask for Books of Devotion; do you think that generally they give you such as most delight you? No, I do assure you, this is not the intention of your Rule and the same may be said of your other Exercises.

One Sister finds her self, as she apprehends much inclin'd to pray, to recite her Office, or to be retired; and her Superior desires her to go into the Kitchin, or do such, or such a business; this goes against the grain of one given to Devotion. I tell you that in such a case you must rectify this desire, that GOD may live in you; and that it is impossible to obtain the Union of your Soul with GOD, by

by any other means, but by Mortification. To tell one you must Die is a hard saying, but those words are followed by the sweetest Comfort imaginable, when you are assur'd that by this *Spiritual Death*, you will become *United to GOD*, which is our only true *Spiritual Life*.

You know, that according to our Saviours words, *No Man puts new Wine into old Vessels*. The new Wine of *Love*, cannot enter where *Old Adam Reigns*: The proper Inclinations we inherit from him, must first be destroy'd. You will ask me *how* they must be destroy'd? I answer, by a punctual Obedience to your Rules. I do assure you (and I speak it in GOD's name) that if you do faithfully perform what they teach you, you will most certainly arrive at the end you aim at, which is to be *united to GOD*. Observe my Council; you will never gain Perfection by sitting still with your Arms across. You must labour in good earnest to overcome your self, and to live up to Re

your Rule, and Obedience, and not according to your Inclinations.

Walk then, my dear Sister, in the direct track of your Rules, by observing them punctually, and you will arrive happily at an Union with your GOD, which will conduct you safely to Eternal Felicity. But, let your observance of them be punctual and faithful. If our Lord pleases to careſs you with some Interior Guſt, do not attach your ſelf to it. 'Tis no more but ſuch a Comfiture as Apothecaries uſe to recommend a bitter Potion to a ſick Person. He muſt swallow the diſgulfuſ draught for his Health, and tho' he receives thoſe ſugred Grains, yet he muſt afterwards feel the diſgulfuſ bitterness of the Medecin. By this you ſee clearly what kind of pretencion you ought to have, that you may become a worthy Spouse of our Lord, and what diſposition will render you capable to be wedded to him in the Bridal place of Love, Mount Calvary.

Live

Live then every step of your whole Life, and frame all your Actions, according to your Rule, and God will reward you with a thousand Blessings. All your happiness consists in Perseverance. I do heartily exhort you to it, my dearest Daughter, and I do earnestly beseech his Infinite Goodness, that he will heap upon you his Heavenly Grace, and affect you with his Divine Love in this World, which will make us all meet joyfully in his Glory in the next. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXXXVII.

Certain Maxims, or Rules, how to live constantly in the Exercise of Virtue.

THE first Maxim is, that of St. Paul: *All things co-operate for the Good of those who love God.* Since GOD knows how to bring Good out of Ill, for whom should he do this, but for those who, *without reserve*, give themselves up to him; nay he makes their very past *Sins* contribute to their good, as we see in *David*, St. *Peter*, and the holy *Magdalen*.

If GOD casts the filth of Ignominious, and Shameful *Sins*, before our Eyes; 'tis to make the Honourable Sight of *Virtue* more Beautiful. If GOD makes you fall flat on the Earth, as he did St. *PAUL*, 'tis to raise you up to a higher Glory.

The second Maxim is, that GOD is our *Father*, otherwise he would not have commanded us to say

Our

Our Father, who art in Heaven;
 and what can give us cause of
 Fear, while we are *Children* of such
 a *Father*, without whose Prov-
 idence nor the least hair of our
 Head can be lost to us. 'Tis an
 unaccountable folly, that, being
Children of such a *Father*, we can
 admit any other care but that of
 Loving and Serving him. *Think you*
of me, laid our *Saviour* to *St. Ca-*
tharine, and you may be well assur'd
I'll think of you.

The third Maxim is, that which
 our *Saviour* taught his *Apostles*:
When I sent you without Scrip or
Staff, did you want any thing? they
 answered No. Reflect then,
 that when you have suffer'd Af-
 flictions, even at such times, when
 you had as yet no Confidence in
 GOD, did you perish in those Af-
 flictions? You know you did not.
 How then can you entertain any
 thought of *Despondency*, or want
 Courage to overcome your Adver-
 sities? GOD has never forsaken
 you to this present hour, and why
 should he forsake you just now,

when you are resolv'd to be *His*, and to trust him in a *better* manner, than formerly? Be not thus apprehensive of future Mishaps. Perhaps they will never light to your share; and, if they should, GOD will strengthen you to bear them. He commande St. *Peter* to walk to him upon the Water; St. *Peter* terrify'd with the blustering Wind and gaping Waves, was frighted, and fear'd he should be drown'd,, and calls to his Divine Master for help. If GOD ordains that you should walk upon the boisterous Waves of Adversity, doubt not, fear not; GOD is with you; take Courage, he will stretch ont his hand and deliver you.

The fourth Maxim is, grounded on the consideration of *Eternity*. It imports me little *what I am*, or *how I am* for these few fleeting Moments, so I enjoy eternally the Glory of my GOD. My Soul, we are marching towards Eternity every step we take; we have in a manner one foot in the brink of it

it already. Let it be a *happy Eternity*, and what matters it whether our stay here for an Instant, be vexatious or no. Is it possible we should know, that the suffering troubles for three, or four days should bring us *Eternal Consolation* and infinite content forever, and yet we should think much to endure such an uneasiness, and for so *short a time*? Whatever is not for *Eternity*, is in reality nothing but *Fleeting Vanity*.

The fifth Maxim, is that of the Apostle. *Far be it from me, that I should Glory but in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Plant deep in your Heart *Jesus Christ Crucify'd*, and then all the *Crosses* of this World will seem to you *Roses*. They who are pierced deep with the Sense of a *Crown of Thorns* which Christ our Head wore, will never feel any pain by the little scratches, or prickles of *Worldly Afflictions*.

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